A PROGRAM TO STRENGTHEN THE RESEARCH CAPACITY OF RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

A Proposal for Supplemental Funding Submitted to:

The Ford Foundation
Rural Poverty and Resources Program
320 East 43rd Street
New York, New York 10017

and

The Aspen Institute
Rural Economic Policy Program
1333 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20036

by:

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ABSTRACT

This proposal requests supplemental funding to continue operating the Research Capacity Initiative, a project that provides research assistance to rural development organizations. RCI's four strategies are to (1) support collaborative research between selected rural organizations and well-qualified, experienced researchers, (2) develop research-related manuals, (3) conduct research skills workshops, and (4) provide researcher and publication referrals. Our request to the Ford Foundation is for $153,000 to support the Research Capacity Initiative for one additional year.

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ATTACHMENTS

- identifying appropriate researchers, in consultation with the groups;
- helping the two parties agree on a workplan;
- administering the agreement, in the form of a contract between Washington State University and the researcher; and, in most cases,
- troubleshooting or advising during the project and then reviewing the final product.

As of September, 1991, we have assisted 11 groups in this manner. Seven were selected from a pool that responded to our RFP in early 1990, and the others were selected as they submitted proposals over the last 12 months. The nature of our work with the groups is described in the text below and is outlined in Figure 1. A more complete description of the 11 projects is included as Attachment A.

Five of the 11 groups have received help from an RCI researcher in conducting planning studies. Each of the 5 groups had preliminary research questions they wanted to answer, but lacked funding and skills necessary to conduct their analysis. In 4 of the 5 cases, the purpose of the planning studies was to refine the questions, design a research project, and develop a funding proposal. In the fifth case, RCI supported a strategic planning meeting to help the group's staff think through whether research was a realistic and appropriate next step. (Subsequent to the planning meeting, RCI agreed to support a researcher to assist the group in developing a research proposal.)

Five other groups received help in designing and implementing a research plan. In each of these cases, the groups had funding to do the project but lacked necessary skills that an experienced researcher could provide.

One group received help in analyzing data and writing a report. This group had earlier been funded to do a project and had completed data collection, but needed assistance in the final stages of their work.

To get an outsider's advice on our collaborative research strategy, RCI hired Dr. Don Villarejo, Director of the California Institute for Rural Studies. Dr. Villarejo helped RCI staff develop two questionnaires that we then used to interview researchers and staff members from groups with which we have worked. We mailed a questionnaire to each respondent and then interviewed him or her by phone. We *only* interviewed people working on projects that are finished or near completion.

FIGURE 1

Status of the RCI Collaborative Research Projects as of Sept. 1991

Group and Total RCI Funding	Type	Date Started	Status	Notes
Alternative Energy Resources Organization $1,750	Planning study	May 1990	Contract with researcher completed; expect proposal by late 1991	Project served as *long-term* planning activity
Center for Community Action Planning meeting: $2,310 Proposal design: $1,985 (estimated)	Planning meeting and help with proposal	Feb. 1991: mtg. Sept. 1991: proposal work	Work underway; expect proposal to Ford by Oct. 1991	Future work with researcher expected
Idaho Women's Network $2,300 (estimated)	Planning study	Sept. 1991	Work underway; expect proposal by early 1992	RCI workshop participant
Wisconsin Rural Development Center $2,025	Planning study	May 1990	Contract with researcher complete; funding inquiry made to REPP	Future work with researcher possible
Women and Employment $3,000	Planning study	May 1990	Contract with researcher complete; proposal submitted to Hitachi and others	Future work with researcher expected
Coastal Enterprises, Inc. $4,500	Research project	May 1990	Data analysis underway; expect report by Fall 1991	Future work with researcher expected
Columbia Basin Institute $7,300: Funding directly from Ford Foundation rather than from RCI	Help with proposal and research project	Feb. 1991	Data analysis underway; researchers under contract with CBI	Second project being considered
First Nations Financial Project $4,500 (estimated)	Research project	July 1990	Data collection continuing	Problems with data collection
Nez Perce Tribe $6,300	Research project	April 1991	Data analysis underway; expect to complete Nov. 1991	Second project being considered
Oregon Child Care Resource and Referral $6,750	Research project	May 1990	Report completed; contract with researcher completed	Future work with researcher expected
Ganados del Valle RCI Director assisted; no direct funding provided	Data analysis and report writing	Sept. 1990	Report underway	--

We addressed 5 questions in our evaluation:

1) Were expectations about the collaborative research projects realistic?

2) Did the collaboration result in reports or other documents that were useful to the groups?

3) Were the relationships between the groups and the researchers trusting and productive?

4) What benefits did the groups and the researchers derive from their work together?

5) How can RCI's collaborative research strategy be made more effective?

Expectations Overall, the groups, the researchers, and we ourselves had similar, realistic expectations about what could be accomplished through a strategy of supporting collaborative research. We also generally agreed on the division of labor between researchers and groups, a very important component of any collaborative project.

Despite our overall success, not all our ideas about how things would proceed proved sensible. Our most unrealistic expectation about the collaborative research projects was how long each would take to yield a document that was useful to the groups. Specifically, we expected that the 3 original planning studies would have resulted in written proposals by now and that 4 of the other projects would have resulted in final reports. In fact, none of the 3 planning studies produced a proposal before the researcher's contract period expired (although one later produced a proposal and one a letter of inquiry), and only one other project has so far produced a final report.

Our expectations about a time frame for the planning studies were unrealistic because we did not understand how the groups viewed our work with them. AERO, the sustainable agriculture group from Montana, is typical. They saw the strategic goal of expanding beyond production agriculture issues as one of many on a list of new programs for the 1990's. They are *very* pleased that, thanks to RCI, they've had the luxury of doing basic planning work for this new project so early in the decade. In short, we thought -- as did the researchers we hired -- there was some urgency to the planning studies, but the groups did not.

Our expectations about a time frame for the research projects also proved unrealistic, but for more complex and diverse reasons. The one report that was completed on schedule was from the Oregon child care project. For a reason we

can't pinpoint, its entire research team was far more motivated to produce policy-relevant results quickly than were the other groups, whose projects are all still in progress.

One clear problem has delayed projects involving survey research. Although the groups have been good at the early task of framing general questions, they have trouble narrowing in on specific, analytical questions once the data have been collected. Because they have little or no research experience, we should expect this part of the research process to require extra time and care.

Another unrealistic expectation was the idea that an RCI researcher could be an advisor-in-residence, consulting on a range of projects as they came along. Specifically, the Coastal Enterprises researcher was expected to help on several studies related to the organization's program and policy development work. This arrangement was unsuccessful because no one imposed discipline and focus. As a result, the researcher's time was spread among too many projects and was not as productive as we had hoped.

Finally, the Center for Community Action's strategic planning meeting fell a little short of what we had hoped for. There were two problems, first, the participants felt we had not been specific enough about what we wanted them to discuss, and second, they needed more than the 1.5 days we allotted to get to know each other and then conduct business. On the other hand, the meeting did have a productive outcome. CCA staff and the consultants concluded that research was indeed an appropriate next step. CCA has since asked for and received help from one of the consultants, Dr. Tomaskovic-Devey, in developing a research proposal for the Ford Foundation.

The specific problems we have discussed so far should not detract from the conclusion that our overall expectations were realistic. When the projects are all done, each group will be better informed about a policy issue central to their advocacy mission. For example, First Nations will have data to contribute to GAO's analysis of Bureau of Indian Affairs land management practices and Coastal Enterprises will join Maine's bankers in improving small business credit policies. Hence, on the central premise that collaborative research can inform and prepare groups for policy work, our expectations have been realistic.

Products As we noted above, one group has finished a proposal, one a letter of inquiry about funding, and one a final report. In our opinion, each of these three "products" are solid, thoughtful documents. In particular, Oregon Child Care's report contributes both to policy discussions in Oregon and to the discipline of child care studies.

We are reasonably confident the other projects will also result in proposals

and reports, although most will need additional, patient help from the researchers. For example, staff from Columbia Basin Institute are now getting ready to analyze data from their household survey. Because they don't have research experience, we think the task of moving from computer output to a useful report will be especially hard for them. The same is true for other projects, including Coastal Enterprises, Nez Perce, and Ganados del Valle. Staff from First Nations have somewhat more experience with research and should have less trouble with their final report, once they clear the hurdle of data collection.

A very important issue is whether the products that result from our support are high quality. In only *one* case do we question whether the research method was entirely sound, and therefore, whether the final report will be credible and useful. We plan to review this document and work with its authors to make sure they draw only those conclusions that can be supported by their analysis.

Relationships Two factors affect the quality of relationships between researchers and groups: ideology, and geographical distance.

In our interviews, several groups said it was important that the researcher agree with the group's mission and choice of research questions. One director told us he looked for "ideological harmony" with a researcher. Another was pleased the researcher was "allied with their cause."

Nonetheless, finding a researcher who is ideologically sympathetic doesn't mean the groups want to work with a researcher who won't confront them about unsound ideas. One staff member said that their researcher was too willing to support what the group wanted to do, and didn't offer enough critical analysis: "she should have been tougher, stronger, and clearer about what we were trying to do."

None of the groups interviewed said they had a bad relationship with their researcher, or *at any time were not respected*. From our perspective, however, tension over a politically sensitive issue did threaten one relationship and until the final report is done, we won't know the full consequences of the problem.

Distance is also an important factor. For each group, we tried to find a qualified researcher in the same state or, at the minimum, in the same region. We succeeded for every group except First Nations, in which case we sacrificed proximity for quality and seem to have paid a price. For First Nations, other circumstances combined to make the distance especially problematic. Data collection took place in Oregon and was delayed by a stubborn government agency; the staff member responsible for the project was based in New Mexico, and the researcher was in Arizona. The outcome might have been different if we had monitored the progress of the project more carefully and done more

troubleshooting.

Benefits of Collaboration In addition to answering specific research questions, we hope that collaborative work will encourage community groups to realize the benefits of policy research and make it an integral part of their programs. We can't tell yet whether RCI has resulted in long-term changes in how groups value research. However, our interviews encouraged us to believe we are having some effect.

Dr. Tom Anding, who worked with the Wisconsin Rural Development Center, commented on how WRDC's Board changed its view of research during the collaborative project. Before the RCI grant, members of the board strongly opposed all research activities. During the course of the project, however, they came to see a real purpose in making research part of their long-term programming decisions. Anding suggested to us that for a relatively small amount of money, we purchased significant thinking time and made a big difference in how WRDC works.

A staff member from Coastal Enterprises told us she now has a much clearer understanding of why her organization needs better information on their client population. Directors from other groups gave us similar, positive messages. For example, Pam Curry of Women and Employment said, "We are more knowledgeable about the use of the Freedom of Information Act, and better able to conceptualize needed information and methods to obtain it. We have sharpened our abilities to articulate findings into a format that is understandable to private funders and the public sector ... Our apprenticeship project would not have been possible without RCI assistance. Thank you, thank you, thank you."

In addition to changing how groups view research, we also hoped to give researchers a clearer perspective on real problems faced by community activists, a tall order indeed. Our interviews suggested some success in this area. At North Carolina State University, for example, faculty with rural interests plan to present research findings and ideas for new projects at a forum in October, 1991. Dr. Don Tomaskovic-Devey, who worked with the Center for Community Action, has invited CCA to join other state and local organizations to critique faculty's work and proposals at the October forum. This is a good example of how community groups can be more involved in setting academic research agendas.

Ways to Improve Our interviews gave us insight on several ways to make RCI more effective:

First, if we decide that a strategic planning meeting is a prerequisite to research for a particular group, we should orchestrate the meeting more carefully and be willing to support at least 2 days of consultants' time. Our experience with

the Center for Community Action suggests that planning meetings can improve prospects for good research, but they need to be better managed and longer.

Second, we should be more flexible about what we expect from planning studies. Some groups, like AERO, have long-term perspectives and cannot be expected to produce a proposal in a 3- or 6-month time frame. Others, like Idaho Women's Network, feel the issue is urgent, and want proposals more quickly. Both outlooks are legitimate and within the scheme of what we want to accomplish, but must be clarified at the beginning of each study.

Third, we should be prepared to take a more active role in *some but not all* of the research projects we support. Exactly how we get involved must depend on the circumstances of the particular project. In some cases, like Oregon Child Care, the researcher and the development group need almost no extra help. They work competently and according to plan. Others need to be monitored and assisted. For example, we did not realize that our choice of researchers for Coastal Enterprises was not the best until the project was complete. Had we monitored the work more carefully, we could have intervened and encouraged a better outcome. We found this job to be much easier when projects were based near us, for example, Columbia Basin Institute and the Nez Perce Tribe. Regardless of distance, we should consider meeting with the researchers and groups at the beginning of some projects to iron out problems ahead of time.

Fourth, to pre-empt problems like the one we had with Coastal Enterprises, we need to screen our researchers more carefully. In-depth telephone interviews will help us evaluate whether a researcher's skills are as polished as their resumes indicate. In addition to asking about qualifications, we should ask each researcher candidate how they would design the project and then evaluate their responses. We have learned to specify responsibilities ahead of time. For example, for the survey projects we've supported most recently, we listed in the contract 10-12 specific tasks for the researcher to complete and adjusted their payment schedule accordingly. This seems to keep projects on track very effectively.

Finally, we should hire researchers in the same or a nearby state for complicated projects that require close contact between participants. Planning meetings and studies seem to tolerate researchers who are not as close, especially if the group is simply working out ideas for long-range projects. However, we must keep in mind the objective of building permanent working relationships which are clearly most productive when partners are located close to each other.

Strategy 2: Research Manuals

Our second strategy has been to write and distribute manuals intended to

strengthen research capacity. We originally conceived the manuals as a means of expanding our impact beyond the few groups we can work with personally. The first, *A Community Researcher's Guide to Rural Data*, was published by Island Press in April, 1990. The Aspen Institute's Rural Economic Policy Program distributed about 500 free copies of the manual and Island Press had sold 648 as of August, 1991.

Contingent on funding, the Texas Rural Leadership Conference plans to buy 1,000 copies of the data manual. The Conference is a coalition of roughly 30 organizations, including universities, state agencies, chambers of commerce, small businesses, and community development groups. The manual will be used as part of an "instructor friendly" curriculum distributed to rural Texas communities that need help with economic development but don't have the resources or are too isolated to seek professional help.

Reviews, advertisements, and announcements of the data manual have appeared in a variety of publications, including *Choices*, *Small Town*, *Western Planner*, *Rural Development Perspectives*, *The Changing Northwest*, and the newsletters of three Regional Rural Development Centers. The *Small Town* review is included as Attachment B.

Work continues on a second manual, *Conducting Surveys: A Guide for Community Researchers*. Priscilla Salant is the primary author, and is collaborating with Dr. Don Dillman, Director of Washington State University's Social and Economic Sciences Research Center and author of *Mail and Telephone Surveys: The Total Design Method*. A complete outline and sample chapter are included together as Attachment C.

Six of the survey manual's 13 chapters have been written. Although the manual is not yet finished, it has already been useful in staff work. Several groups have used drafts of the early chapters in preparing to do their own surveys. In addition, these chapters formed the basis for several sessions at the Research Skills Workshop, which we describe later.

In general, we believe that the strategy of using manuals to build capacity is a good one. Published reviews of *A Community Researcher's Guide to Rural Data* have been positive, Island Press's sales figures are acceptable, and the author has received several speaking requests as a result.

Since work began on the second manual, the need for a clear and comprehensive guide to survey research has become even more apparent. Seven of our 11 collaborative projects involve some kind of survey, and 7 of the 13 workshop participants need, at the very minimum, to better understand what survey research can and cannot provide. Some groups want to do a community

needs assessment, others want to survey households to evaluate economic well-being, and others want to do marketing research for business development. But *none* of the groups that have asked RCI for help, even the largest intermediaries, have the skills necessary to gather accurate and useful information using survey research. For this reason, RCI staff considers the task of finishing the survey manual a top priority.

Strategy 3: Workshops

Our third strategy has been to develop a curriculum for and conduct research skills workshops. We designed the first workshop, which took place in July, 1991, for rural groups in the Northwest. Dr. Bruce Weber from Oregon State University and Dr. Corinne Lyle from the University of Idaho collaborated with us from the planning stage through the actual workshop. We requested and received supplemental funding for the project from the Western Rural Development Center at Oregon State University.

Our goals for the workshop were to introduce participating groups to basic research methods, to help them formulate useful and answerable research questions, and then to assist them in designing a research project.

The job of getting people to apply to the workshop proved to be very labor intensive, as we expected from our earlier experience with the RFP. To generate a mailing list for our workshop brochure, we called community-based groups about which we knew already, state agencies, and regional policy and funding organizations. We then mailed the brochure and application (Attachment D) to some 200 groups. Groups interested in attending the workshop were asked to fill out an application in which they described their research experience, issues about which they needed more information and analysis, and how they intended to use the product of their research.

We followed up the mailing with about 50 telephone calls to encourage groups we thought were most likely to apply. The personal contact helped the groups evaluate whether they could benefit by attending the workshop. One common response we heard was that people didn't pay much attention to the brochure because they weren't sure what we meant by "research," or had presumed we meant research in the natural sciences.

Three weeks before the application deadline, we called about 20 groups that had indicated interest during the first follow-up phone calls, but who had not yet applied. The last round of calls yielded an additional 10 applications.

Working with Dr. Weber and Dr. Lyle, we selected 13 of the 26 applications

we received. Our main objective in selecting participants was to put together a group of people that had some common interest in development work and were relatively homogeneous in terms of the kind of research assistance they needed. We also took into account our own ability to help them answer their questions.

We tried to give the groups that were rejected some assistance by providing them with names of researchers who were knowledgeable about the questions they listed in their applications.

The workshop was intended to be a nonacademic short course in applied research methods. (The program is included as Attachment E.) Each participant received a notebook containing session handouts and a variety of information on his or her particular community, county, and state. The "tailored" material in the notebook included 1990 Census statistics, data from the *City and County Data Book*, State Data Center contacts, and excerpts from the *1990-91 Directory of Professional Workers in State Agricultural Experiment Stations*.

The workshop's opening address, "Practitioners and Public Policy: Research as the Missing Link," was presented by the director of Oregon Child Care, a group that received help from an RCI researcher during the past year. She focused on why a community group would want to spend scarce resources on research: to give credibility to their claims, and to make sure that they are asking answerable questions that make a difference in policy-making. The address became a reference point for the rest of the workshop, serving as a familiar, concrete example for participants and session leaders.

The remainder of the workshop was conducted by the organizers as well as hired consultants. Some sessions dealt with basic research concepts while others focused on the participants' specific research interests. For example, Rich Rohde, the director of an advocacy group called Oregon Fair Share, wanted to study private sector health insurance programs so his group could work more effectively on health care reform. We hired the Director of the Oregon Office of Health Policy to work one-on-one with Mr. Rohde to identify appropriate secondary data sources and design a business survey on insurance issues.

As far as we know, our workshop was the first organized attempt to give rural development practitioners a course in research methods. Hence, we were especially interested in getting participants' reactions, which we asked them to give us on an evaluation form.

Overall, participants gave the workshop a rating of 9 on a 1-to-10 scale (where 10 was high). The most popular sessions were the break-out groups in which 1-3 people worked with a researcher who specialized in their area of interest. Also rated highly were sessions focusing on concrete skills: survey

research, secondary data sources, and focus groups. More abstract sessions, such as those on planning a research project and interpreting new information, were less popular. We are convinced that the abstract subjects are important, but need to be presented better.

For some participants, the sum seemed greater than the parts. One commented that although not all sessions provided her with new information, she appreciated having it organized so she could think about why and how she was doing her own project, a tourism study. Another person said, "The best part was not the content but the opportunity to get to know all you researchers on a personal level. This makes getting university help much more feasible."

Our strategy of holding a *regional* workshop so groups could make lasting contacts with researchers in their own states seems to have paid off. In particular, the likelihood of Oregon participants working with Dr. Weber and others from Oregon State University seems extremely high.

Participants gave us a clear message that we need to make the workshop *more applied*. We see two ways of doing this. First, we can use a more interactive method of teaching. Instead of having break outs at the end of the workshop, we can allow time at the end of each session to apply new material to participants' specific projects. Second, we can make sure the outside consultants who serve as session leaders illustrate their material with less academic and more relevant examples.

Another message we received was that we tried to teach too much material in a short time. Our attempt to compress the whole research process into 1.5 days proved impractical. Next time, we propose lengthening the workshop to at least 2 days, eliminating the least effective sessions, and allowing more free time for people to "process" the material.

A final issue of concern was our attempt to make the workshop useful for both advocates and mainstream economic development groups. Unfortunately, the two types of participants interacted very little. Although their evaluations were as positive as those of the advocates, the economic development people were noticeably quieter during the discussion periods. We aren't sure why this was the case; it may be they felt outnumbered -- which they were -- or that they felt out of place. It was clear they felt less passion and enthusiasm for finding new information than did the advocates.

Strategy 4: Referrals

Although we have not publicized RCI as an information clearing house, we

received and responded to 6 requests for referrals in the last year. Three relatively small intermediaries asked for names of researchers or extension staff who could work directly with particular grassroots development organizations. In each case, the grassroots groups were small and made up of minorities. The other requests came directly from grassroots groups themselves, and pertained to publications, researchers, and in one case, assistance in finding and using electronic Census data.

Responding to each of the requests has required an average of 1-2 days of staff time. While our staffing level prevents us from handling many more requests than we have in the past, providing referrals remains an important service for us to perform. The groups that have asked for help are generally isolated from information providers in their geographic region and substantive area of interest. Hence, any brokering we can do to help them link up with the research community is warranted.

Proposed Work

A supplemental grant of $153,000 is requested to continue the Research Capacity Initiative. The main activities that would be supported by the grant are:

- finishing and arranging for the publication of *Survey Research: A Guide for Community Researchers*;
- continuing to work with on-going collaborative projects;
- issuing a second Request for Proposals, with the intention of making 7 more matches;
- conducting a second Research Skills Workshop and presenting selected workshop sessions at conferences organized by other development intermediaries; and
- continuing to provide referrals on request.

Survey Research: A Guide for Community Researchers

As we mentioned above, finishing our second major publication should take precedence over other activities. We estimate that writing the remaining 7 chapters will require at least 4 or 5 months of concentrated work. Division of responsibilities will remain the same with RCI Director, Ms. Salant, doing the writing and Dr. Dillman serving as an advisor. The authors plan to submit the

manuscript to a commercial publisher.

On-Going Collaborative Projects

Eight of the 11 original projects will involve additional staff time, although none is expected to require more funding (see Figure 1, page 4). RCI staff will review and comment on proposals from the Center for Community Action and Wisconsin Rural Development Center as well as final reports from Coastal Enterprises, Ganados del Valle, Nez Perce Tribe, and the Columbia Basin Institute. Other administrative and substantive work will also be required to complete the Idaho Women's Network and First Nations projects.

Second Request for Proposals

The number of responses to our first RFP in early 1990 was disappointing. However, we were able to build a successful track record from those original projects and gain enough experience and standing to try the RFP strategy again. If this proposal is approved, we plan to initiate a second competitive selection process in late Fall, 1991. Our strategy will be to send announcements and make follow-up phone calls as necessary. We will update our original mailing list by adding groups we have learned about since 1990, as well as groups identified by another Ford Foundation project, the Rural Telecommunications Initiative (RTI). We also plan to announce the competition on HandsNet, RTI's computer network system.

We will also make a concerted effort to bring other foundations into the process. We plan to do this by personally contacting staff persons from foundations who share our three-way interest in rural development, research, and community-based social change. We believe that in particular, Northwest Area, Mott, and Joyce Foundations all have potential to "buy in" to our work by viewing us as a resource for their grantees, and encouraging groups to seek us out for help.

We will review the proposals we receive with help from selected members of our advisory committee, and select up to 7 additional groups as participants in collaborative projects. We have budgeted for 1 strategic planning meeting, 3 planning studies, and 3 research projects.

Research Skills Workshops

Using the curriculum we developed for our first Research Skills Workshop, we plan to hold one more in the coming year. We think that a more efficient way of organizing the workshops is to pool our resources with established development intermediaries. We have approached two such organizations, the Edmund S. Muskie Institute for Public Affairs in Maine and MDC, Inc. in North Carolina, about cooperating with us to conduct a workshop, each in their respective region. Both are interested and we hope to reach a final agreement with one by late Fall, 1991. The intent is to combine our expertise and financial support with their client bases. The intermediaries will be responsible for developing mailing lists for the workshop announcement, making follow-up phone calls, and with our help, assembling a group of "research-ready" participants. Our role will be to organize the workshop program, arrange for presenters, and cover travel and facility costs.

RCI staff will also be available to conduct research skills sessions at conferences held by other organizations. As an example, RCI Director Priscilla Salant will present a 1-day course at the Community Strategic Training Institute. This conference has been organized by the Western States Center in Portland, Oregon and will take place in November, 1991.

Referrals

While we will not advertise ourselves as a clearing house, we plan to continue responding to information and researcher requests at the same level we have in the past. We believe this service contributes to our overall objective of strengthening the research capacity of rural groups.

Institutional Arrangements and Project Director

If approved, the supplemental grant will be made to the Department of Agricultural Economics, Washington State University. Priscilla Salant will continue in her current capacity as Project Director and will have an Associate in Research position at WSU. She will have the use of office facilities, as well as support from one additional staff person, Anita Waller, whose salary will be covered under this grant. Ms. Salant's resume is included as Attachment F.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Composition of the faculty and staff at the Department of Agricultural Economics, Washington State University, is as follows:

	White		Minority	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Faculty	29	3	0	0
Professional staff	1	1	0	0
Clerical staff	0	7	0	0

Women and minorities are not well-represented in faculty or professional positions in this department, although its composition is not unlike that of other agricultural economics departments in the region and seems to reflect conditions in the field as a whole. The American Agricultural Economics Association (AAEA) estimates that roughly 16% of ag. econ. PhD graduates since 1988 have been women. (No figures are available on minority degree recipients.) In the West, roughly one-fourth of assistant professors are women, 3% are minorities (mostly in the Southwest), and the figures decline markedly for tenured positions.

Funding is not currently available to fill the single vacancy that exists in the WSU Agricultural Economics Department. When it does become available, the position will be advertised in newsletters published by AAEA's Committee on the Status of Women in Agricultural Economics and Committee on Blacks in Agricultural Economics. Unfortunately, past experience suggests that Pullman's isolation and small size, as well as the racial homogeneity of the surrounding community, make it unlikely that the Department will achieve significantly greater diversity.

Composition of the Washington State University Board of Regents is as follows:

White		Minority	
Male	Female	Male	Female
5	1	1	2

The regents and their affiliations are listed below:

Mr. Louis H. Pepper
Chairman, Retired, Washington Mutual Savings Bank

Mr. Richard R. Albrecht
Executive Vice President, Boeing Commercial Airplane Company

Ms. Phyllis J. Campbell
Executive Vice President, U.S. Bank

Mr. R. M. "Mac" Crow
Wheat Rancher

Mr. Richard A. Davis
President, Pentzer Corporation

Mr. Scott B. Lukins
Attorney, Lukins & Annis, P.S.

Mrs. Frances L. Scott
Attorney

Mrs. Kate B. Webster
Community Leader, Bainbridge Island, WA

Dr. William R. Wiley
Senior Vice President and Director, Battelle Pacific Northwest Laboratories

Budget
December 1, 1991 -- November 30, 1992

Summary

SALARIES, BENEFITS	$66,906
TRAVEL, PER DIEM	11,217
WORKSHOP	16,000
CONSORTIUM RESEARCHERS	29,300
OFFICE	4,077
OVERHEAD	25,500
TOTAL	$153,000

Detail

Salaries[1]	
Project Director - Priscilla Salant	$26,780
Project Assistant - Anita Waller	26,320
	53,100
Fringe Benefits (at 26% of salaries)	
Project Director - Priscilla Salant	6,963
Project Assistant - Anita Waller	6,843
	13,806
SUBTOTAL SALARIES, BENEFITS	$66,906
Travel and Per diem	
Washington, D.C. (2 trips, 3 days each)	
Airfare	$2,164
Per diem	786
	2,950
Boise, ID (1 trip, 2 days)	
Airfare	254
Per diem	146
	400
Wiscassett, ME (1 trip, 4 days)	
Airfare	1,232
Rental car	200
Per diem	288
	1,720

Durham, NC (3 trips, 3.5 days each)	
Airfare	3,451
Rental car	600
Per diem	816
	4,867
Santa Fe, NM (1 trip, 3 days)	
Airfare	977
Per diem	303
	1,280
SUBTOTAL TRAVEL, PER DIEM	$11,217
Workshop for development groups[2]	
Brochure	$500
Workbook & materials	500
Consultant fees	2,000
Subcontracted workshop development	5,000
Lodging & meeting facility	3,500
Travel	
Airfare	3,750
Ground	750
SUBTOTAL WORKSHOP	$16,000
Collaborative Research Projects	
RFP brochure	$500
Honorarium for proposal reviewers	1,000
Matches[3]	
Strategic planning meeting (1 @ $2,300)	2,300
Planning studies (3 @ $2,500)	7,500
Research design & implementation (3 @ $6,000)	18,000
SUBTOTAL CONSORTIUM RESEARCHERS	$29,300
Office expenses	
Paper/printer supplies/photocopies	$700
Postage & express mail	700
Telephone & fax	1050
Handsnet annual subscription, Telecommunications fees	1150
Publications	477
SUBTOTAL OFFICE	$4,077

TOTAL DIRECT COSTS	$127,500
OVERHEAD (20%)	$25,500
TOTAL	$153,000

1.Project Director annual FTE salary is $40,668 (WSU salary grade level 41.0D). Actual cost based on 80% appointment December 1991 through May 1992, 10% appointment June through August, and 80% September through November. Project Assistant annual FTE salary is $25,547 (WSU salary grade level 24.0D). Budget for both salaries increased by 6% inflation factor starting January 1, 1992 as required by WSU Office of Grants and Research Development.

2.Includes travel for participants from 15 development groups and five consulting researchers.

3.Researchers are paid $250/day. Strategic planning meeting includes fees for 6 days, 3 days of 2 researchers' time, and $400 travel each. Planning studies include fees for 8 days of one researcher's time and $500 travel. Research design & implementation includes 21 days of one researcher's time and $750 travel.

ATTACHMENT A 9/91

RESEARCH CAPACITY INITIATIVE
Summary of Collaborative Research Projects

Planning Studies

Alternative Energy Resources Organization (AERO), Helena, Montana

AERO is a regional group with about 500 members in the northern Rocky Mountain states and western Canada. Since 1984, AERO has worked on production issues related to sustainable agriculture. The organization responded to RCI's RFP, and asked for help with long range planning work for a new program area. Specifically, AERO would like to expand its focus beyond agricultural production issues and begin working to improve the entrepreneurial skills of low-input farmers, as well as their processing, transportation, and marketing options.

Dr. Paul Barkley, an agricultural economist from Washington State University, helped AERO think through what research the organization could and should undertake before beginning work in the new program area. He met several times with AERO staff and members, and gave a keynote address at their annual membership meeting. He will also review the project proposal when it is completed later in 1991.

Center for Community Action (CCA), Lumberton, North Carolina

CCA is a community-based group started in 1980 to advocate for the rural poor in Robeson County, North Carolina. Its strategy is to organize and support citizens' groups around issues of local economic and social policy. One of CCA's strengths is its ability to work effectively in multi-racial and multi-cultural communities. Responding to RCI's RFP, the group requested help with research that would allow it to expand its work to an eleven-county area.

RCI funded a strategic planning meeting attended by CCA staff members and three advisors (Dr. Don Tomaskovic-Devey, North Carolina State University; Dr. Mike Miller, formerly with Boston University; and Mary Mountcastle, MDC, Inc). The purpose of the meeting, which took place in Spring 1991, was to discuss ways for pursuing CCA's expansion goals.

One result of the meeting was that CCA asked RCI to support Dr. Tomaskovic-Devey's assistance in developing a research proposal to the Ford Foundation. The center piece of the proposal will be a survey of community leaders and university faculty. It is intended to help CCA plan a regional development strategy and inform local policy. The proposal will be completed in October, 1991.

Idaho Women's Network (IWN), Boise, Idaho)

IWN is a 3-year old coalition of organizations and individuals established to improve the quality of life and opportunities for Idaho women and their families. The organization's leaders have concluded that to become more effective, they need more information on the circumstances of Idaho women, as well as on which economic, social and political issues these women consider most important.

IWN was one of 13 participants in RCI's Research Skills Workshop held in July, 1991. As a result of making this contact, IWN requested RCI assistance in designing and securing funding for a study that would provide them with useful information about Idaho women. RCI has identified a political scientist with experience in gender equity issues, Dr. Stephanie Witt from Boise State University, to assist IWN in their planning work. A research proposal is expected to be completed by December, 1991.

Wisconsin Rural Development Center (WRDC), Black Earth, Wisconsin

WRDC is a nonprofit organization started in 1983 to work on family farm and sustainable agriculture issues in Southwest Wisconsin. While remaining active in these issues at both the state and community level, WRDC has begun a new program emphasis on rural arts and culture. One of the group's concerns is that tourism -- which is frequently offered as a development option for rural Wisconsin -- is not often managed in a way that preserves local culture and natural resources.

WRDC responded to RCI's RFP and asked for help in comparing two approaches to tourism development, one financed and owned by outside developers and another called community heritage tourism, theoretically a locally controlled alternative. RCI supported a planning study designed to clarify the tourism issues that were most important to WRDC, translate these issues into research questions, and design a research project. Two researchers, Dr. Tom Anding (Center for Regional and Urban Affairs, University of Minnesota) and Dr. Harriet Moyer (Cooperative Extension, University of Wisconsin) assisted WRDC with the planning study.

As a result of their work with RCI researchers, WRDC is developing a research proposal to evaluate the potential of community heritage tourism in the upper Mississippi River Valley. The organization recently sent a letter of inquiry to the Rural Economic Policy Program regarding the possibility support from the Ford Foundation.

Women and Employment, Inc. (W&E), Charleston, West Virginia

Women and Employment is a community-based, membership organization founded in 1979 to improve the economic well-being of West Virginia's poor and minority women. One of the group's development strategies is to encourage women's work in nontraditional jobs, such as construction.

In their response to RCI's RFP, W&E staff requested help in identifying barriers to women's participation in building trade apprenticeship programs. RCI asked Dr. Barbara Ellen Smith, an independent consultant, to work with W&E on this project. Her main activities were (a) helping W&E staff members clarify what they wanted to achieve by doing the proposed research, (b) finding out whether the U.S. Department of Labor had collected information that would be useful for the project, and (c) developing a three-year research and action plan.

W&E recently submitted the proposal to the Hitachi Foundation and will also seek funding from the U.S. Department of Labor and other sources.

Project Design and Implementation

Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (CEI), Wiscasset, Maine

CEI is a community development corporation formed in 1977 to better the lives of low income, rural people in Maine. Its central strategies focus on developing natural resource industries, job-generating manufacturers, small enterprises, self-employment, and child care services.

In 1990, the Ford Foundation provided CEI with support for a development project that would lay the groundwork for several new initiatives. Then, in response to RCI's RFP, CEI asked for help on one part of the development project which involved a survey of small businesses. The goals of the survey were to inform CEI's program development work and to enable staff to participate in state policy discussions about small businesses.

Suzanne Hart, from the Human Services Development Institute at the University of Southern Maine, provided assistance on the survey. She worked with CEI staff members to develop a population frame, select a sample, and design a survey instrument. Data collection is now complete and analysis is underway. Hart also advised CEI staff in designing a marketing survey to assess the need for a local credit union and will likely work with CEI in the future on setting up a small area, electronic data base for Maine.

Columbia Basin Institute (CBI), Othello, Washington

CBI is a nonprofit organizing project for the Council for the Development of Hispanics (CDH), a new community development corporation in central Washington. CBI and CDH grew out of senior citizen advocacy work and voter registration drives in 1989-90.

In the Columbia Basin region of Oregon and Washington, many Hispanics find part-time, seasonal jobs in the food processing industry. CBI is concerned that these Hispanics, most of whom are farm workers who have settled out of the migrant stream, do not benefit equitably from state economic development programs targeted at food processing companies.

CBI asked for help from RCI in developing a proposal to study the impact of the food processing industry on local economic well-being. The proposal was submitted to the Ford Foundation and approved in April, 1991. Included in the approved proposal was support for two researchers identified by RCI.

As part of the study, Dr. Paul Barkley helped CBI survey households in the Columbia Basin. Survey data, which are now being analyzed, will provide information on how many families depend on the food processing industry for employment, as well as on the characteristics of their jobs. In another component of the project, David Runsten from the California Institute for Rural Studies will help CBI better understand the history and future prospects for growth in the industry. A final report is expected in Fall, 1991.

First Nations Financial Project (FNFP), Falmouth, Virginia

First Nations is a national Indian development organization started in 1979 to help tribes become financially self-sufficient. The organization is in the middle of a multi-year Tribal Land Consolidation project funded by the MacArthur Foundation, Northwest Area Foundation, and M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust. The goal of the project is to develop a model land consolidation program for the Umatilla study area.

In response to RCI's RFP, First Nations asked for help in doing a part of their land consolidation study which concerned land ownership on the Umatilla Reservation in Oregon. RCI asked Dr. Ron Trosper, an economist and Director of the Native American Forestry Program at Northern Arizona University, to work with First Nations. He helped them design a study to estimate how much it costs the Bureau of Indian Affairs to administer fractionated or "checkerboard" land -- small parcels of land with many owners -- on the Umatilla Reservation. In cooperation with BIA staff, First Nations is now collecting the data they need to make the estimation, and expects to finish by the end of 1991.

Nez Perce Tribe, Men's Coalition Development Program (MCDP), Lapwai, Idaho

The MCDP was formed in 1990 to address high rates of unemployment, suicide, alcoholism, and drug abuse among Nez Perce men. MCDP received a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to form a coalition of service organizations that will identify and address issues of particular concern to tribal men. As a first step in the project, MCDP staff asked RCI for help in conducting a needs assessment survey of Nez Perce men living on the reservation.

RCI matched MCDP with Roberta Sangster, a doctoral student in Sociology at Washington State University. Ms. Sangster helped design and conduct a survey to identify Nez Perce men's use of social services and examine their changing economic and social roles. She is currently assisting with the analysis and in writing a final report, which is expected to be completed by October, 1991.

Oregon Child Care Resource and Referral Network (OCCRRN), Salem, Oregon

OCCRRN is a two-year old alliance of eleven child care agencies located primarily in the state's rural counties. It was organized to improve the effectiveness of its community-based member agencies and to provide information to the Oregon Child Care Commission, a governor-appointed task force.

Responding to RCI's RFP, OCCRRN asked for help in setting up a uniform data system and standard set of reports on child care trends in Oregon. Dr. Arthur Emlen, former director of the Regional Research Institute for Human Services at Portland State University, served as an advisor to OCCRRN in their research. With his help, OCCRRN identified key public policy questions regarding the adequacy of local child care and developed a method of estimating on a county-basis the number of children who need care, the number and type of slots available, and the cost of care per child.

As a result of their research, OCCRRN has become an active and credible participant in state policy discussions about child care resources. Their analysis has provided the best available data on Oregon child care, and has also underscored the need for improved data collection efforts.

Data Analysis and Report Writing

Ganados del Valle, Los Ojos, New Mexico

Ganados del Valle is a community-based organization in northern New Mexico. It was founded in 1981 to improve the economic well-being of local residents while preserving traditional cultural values and maintaining local ownership of natural resources. Its early efforts focused on providing local sheep

ranchers with better meat and wool markets; it has now broadened its efforts to include other aspects of community economic development.

In 1986, Ganados received funding from the Ford Foundation to evaluate the social and economic impacts of tourism development in Taos, New Mexico. The study involved a personal interview survey of some 250 households, including long time residents and newcomers to the area. Recently, Ganados requested the assistance of Priscilla Salant, Director of RCI, to help evaluate the survey results, to analyze secondary data on area employment and income levels, and to write a final report which is expected to be completed in late 1991. Ganados staff members hope the study will provide guidelines for tourism development policy in New Mexico as well as other states.

ATTACHMENT B

Data Guide Helps Researchers Gain Rural Insight

A Community Researcher's Guide to Rural Data, by Priscilla Salant. Published by Island Press, 1718 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 300, Washington D.C. 20009, 1990; 93pp. (paper), $19.95.

Do you want to know what's going on in "rural America?" And, would you like to develop a statistical profile of the economic health and demographics of your community? It's obvious that many changes have occurred in the past couple of decades and this book, prepared at the request of the Rural Economic Policy Program of the Aspen Institute, will help researchers find relevant information on the status of the countryside.

The introduction explains the book's purpose: "to acquaint researches with data that they can use to describe and better understand rural communities. The manual is primarily for researchers in locally based community development organizations, although researchers and other analysts in universities, state governments and policy institutions will find it useful."

The guide describes the places researchers can go and the document series needed in order to find gross statistical rural area data from both national and state sources. It also shows how to find data for individual counties and defined rural areas. It, for example, contains a useful chart showing the locations of federal data depository libraries and data centers in each state. Another convenient chart lists selected data series from the U.S. Census Bureau that pertain to rural concerns.

The strength of *The Guide to Rural Data* involves its efforts to define the terms that researchers will use in their investigations and also with its explanations on how federal and state sources can be used to develop profiles of local areas. Research libraries should certainly consider obtaining this book. It might also be a useful addition for active community and economic development agencies that wish to develop comprehensive profiles of their communities.—KDM

Small Town 21 (January-February 1991): 29-30.

ATTACHMENT C

SURVEY RESEARCH:
A GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY RESEARCHERS
(Outline Summer 1991)

1 Why Do a Survey?
- 1.1 What Makes Surveys Work?
- 1.2 Who Conducts Surveys?
- 1.3 Is a Survey Appropriate for You?
- 1.4 A Legion of Imposters
- 1.5 Types of Surveys

2 Keys to Success
- 2.1 Be specific about why you are doing the survey and for whom
- 2.2 Choose the survey method that is most appropriate for your project
- 2.3 Write good questions
- 2.4 Design an effective, workable questionnaire and test it before the real survey begins
- 2.5 Choose an appropriate sample size for your survey
- 2.6 Select your sample so that its characteristics adequately reflect those of the population in which you are interested
- 2.7 Carry out the survey efficiently and thoroughly
- 2.8 Code, computerize and analyze your data to produce useful information
- 2.9 Present your results in an understandable format, whether you are writing a report or presenting a talk
- 2.10 Budget your resources and get professional help if you need it

3 Pitfalls: The Four Sources of Error
- 3.1 Coverage Error
- 3.2 Sampling Error
- 3.3 Measurement Error
  - 3.3.1 The survey method
  - 3.3.2 The questionnaire
  - 3.3.3 The interviewer
  - 3.3.4 The respondent
- 3.4 Nonresponse Error

4 Why Are You Doing a Survey and For Whom?
- 4.1 Focus Groups Can Help
- 4.2 Two Questions to Answer
  - 4.2.1 What Problem Are You Trying to Solve
  - 4.2.2 What information do you need to solve the problem and how will you use it when the research is over?

5 Choosing a Survey Method
- 5.1 Factors to Consider
- 5.2 Mail Surveys
- 5.3 Telephone Surveys
- 5.4 Face-to-Face Surveys

- 5.5 Drop-off Surveys
- 5.6 What About Response Rate?

6 Writing Good Questions
- 6.1 Four Ways to Structure a Question
  - 6.1.1 Open-ended
  - 6.1.2 Close-ended with ordered choices
  - 6.1.3 Close-ended with unordered choices
  - 6.1.4 Partially close-ended
- 6.2 Common Wording Problems
- 6.3 The Specifics

(Chapters 7-13 not drafted yet.)

7 Design an effective, workable questionnaire and test it before the real survey begins.
- 7.1 Format
  - 7.1.1 Visual impact
  - 7.1.2 Ease of administering and responding
  - 7.1.3 Instructions for enumerator
- 7.2 Specific guidelines for each mode
- 7.3 Pretest and revise questionnaire as necessary

8 Select your sample so that its characteristics adequately reflect those of the population in which you are interested.
- 8.1 Key concepts of probability theory
- 8.2 Define population in unambiguous and relevant way.
- 8.3 Construct frame (VERY IMPORTANT, DESERVES LOTS OF EMPHASIS)
- 8.4 Select design
  - 8.4.1 Probability (SRS, systematic random, stratified, more complex types)
  - 8.4.2 Nonprobability (Judgmental, quota)

9 Choose an appropriate sample size for your survey.
- 9.1 How much accuracy is required
- 9.2 How uniform or diverse the population is
- 9.3 How many subgroups within the sample you will analyze
- 9.4 The size of the population, IF the population is small

10 Carry out the survey efficiently and thoroughly.
- 10.1 Train enumerators well
- 10.2 Publicize the survey
- 10.3 Time the survey for best effect
- 10.4 Develop system to manage enumerators
- 10.5 Follow-up (TDM)

11 Code, computerize, and analyze your data to provide useful information. PLAN AHEAD.
- 11.1 Office edit and coding (discuss SIC, SOC, maybe farm type, other examples

11.1.1 Make sure answers are legible and internally consistent
11.1.2 System for nonresponses
11.1.3) Open ended questions

11.2 Data entry

11.3 Computer edit

11.4 Data management

12 Present your results in a understandable format, whether you are writing a report or giving a talk.

13 Budget your resources and get professional help if you need it. (We may want to put this right after #1)

Chapter 5
Choosing a Survey Method[1]

In this chapter, we discuss the factors that researchers should consider when choosing between mail, face-to-face, and telephone survey methods. No single method can be judged superior to the others *in the abstract*. Instead, each should be evaluated in terms of a specific study topic and population, as well as budget, staff, and time constraints.

Before we explain the factors that go into choosing a particular method, let's review how each one works:

Mail surveys. Researchers select their sample from a reasonably complete address list of the population. Next, they mail a questionnaire to each member of the sample, usually with a cover letter and stamped, return envelop. Respondents complete the questionnaire on their own and mail it back to the researchers. People who do not return the questionnaire promptly can be contacted again with a reminder, either by mail or by telephone (if phone numbers are available).

Telephone interviews. Researchers select their sample from a telephone directory or other list, or alternatively, use a technique called random-digit dialing. People in the sample are interviewed at the time of the original contact or at another, more convenient time. Enumerators can either record answers on a survey form or directly into a computer.

Face-to-face interviews. If either a telephone or address list is available (or can be compiled), researchers select their sample from the list and then contact each member of the sample to conduct the interview in person. If no suitable list is available, researchers use an area frame sampling technique, which we'll explain in Chapter 8. Enumerators conduct interviews with respondents in person, recording the answer to each question on a survey form. If the respondent is not home when the enumerator arrives to conduct the interview, or if for some reason, the interview is interrupted, the enumerator makes another visit to complete the job.

A fourth method, the drop-off survey, combines features of face-to-face interviews with mail surveys. In this case, surveyors go door-to-door, personally delivering questionnaires to individual households or businesses. The respondents

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[1]This chapter draws heavily from TDM, Chapter 2 and "Elements of Success".

complete the questionnaires on their own and return them by mail.

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Choosing a method is sometimes quite easy. Consider the case of a local chamber of commerce whose members wanted to assess a range of service activities that the organization might undertake in the future. At their annual meeting, members voted unanimously to conduct a chamber-wide survey to gather the necessary information. They decided to conduct a mail survey, using a current address list of all member businesses and their owners. The questionnaires were mailed, completed, and returned promptly to the survey director.

In contrast, consider a community action agency whose staff was preparing a grant application to the Federal government. The agency was applying for funds to set up a pilot day care project and had only two weeks to get their proposal in. Much to their alarm, staff members discovered that to complete the application, they needed an estimate of how many preschool age children in the community lived in households in which all adults worked outside the home. Because they needed the information very quickly, they decided to conduct a telephone survey.

And finally, consider a city council whose members wanted to find a solution to the city's growing problem of homeless people. Council members had several options for providing shelter to the homeless, including a vacant school building, city park campsites, and downtown boarding houses. They decided to survey a sample of homeless people about which location was most acceptable and likely to be used. The survey involved face-to-face interviews conducted on street corners, at soup kitchens, and in the bowery district.

The populations that were the focus of these three surveys were dramatically different. The chamber of commerce surveyed its own members, who understood its intentions, wanted to respond to the questionnaire, and for whom the chamber had an accurate list. The community action agency surveyed households who were very likely to have telephones and to welcome efforts to improve local day care services. The city council had no list of homeless people, and furthermore, was likely to encounter respondents who were not interested in or capable of completing a written questionnaire.

Choosing a survey method for these three projects was unusually straightforward. It was clear that a mail survey would work for the chamber, a telephone survey was appropriate for the action agency, and that only face-to-face interviews were suitable for the city council. In most cases, the decision is not as clear cut and many other factors must be considered. We spend the rest of the chapter explaining what these factors are and how they pertain to each method.

Factors to Consider

The first factor to consider in choosing a survey method is the kind of resources you can commit to your research, including:

- How many people are available to work on the survey, whether they have survey experience, and how much they must be paid;
- How much time you have to produce results;
- Whether you have professional assistance and how much;
- What kind of facilities you have at your disposal, especially with respect to telephones; and finally,
- How much money you can spend on the survey.

We'll devote much of this chapter to talking about how these resources play into the choice of a survey method. Too often, though, resources -- usually, *money* -- is the only factor people consider. There is another important factor, though, and that is how sensitive each method is to various kinds of errors. Recall that in Chapter 3, we introduced four error sources:

- Coverage Error: The list -- or frame -- from which the sample is drawn does not match the population that researchers wish to study;
- Sampling error -- Researchers survey a subset or sample of all the people on the list, instead of conducting a complete census;
- Measurement error -- A respondent's answer to a given question is inaccurate, imprecise, or cannot be compared in any useful way to other respondents' answers; and
- Nonresponse error -- A significant number of people in the survey population do not respond to the questionnaire and are different from those who do in a way that is important to the study.

Mail, telephone, and face-to-face surveys are each sensitive to these four types of error in varying degrees. For example, the *Literary Digest* survey we described in Chapter 3 illustrated how coverage error from an incomplete list can bias the results of mail surveys, so much in fact, that the data may be rendered useless.

Each of the four error sources is a potential problem at different stages of survey work. Each can be more or less troublesome depending on what resources are available. For example, consider the choice between the telephone and mail method. Telephone surveys are very sensitive to errors introduced by interviewers

who lead the respondents and therefore bias the results. Mail surveys don't involve interviewers so they aren't sensitive to this particular form of measurement error. All else being equal, a telephone survey is more appropriate when trained interviewers are available, and a mail survey is better when they aren't.

We describe each method in detail in the next section.

Mail Surveys

The greatest strength of mail surveys is that they are the least demanding in terms of the resources they require. Respondents -- not interviewers -- fill out the questionnaires, so the number of people required to conduct the survey is generally lower. The skills needed are primarily clerical: typing, sorting, and processing correspondence.

In addition, mail surveys can be done with less professional consultation than other types of surveys. Researchers can spend weeks or months designing the questionnaire and a procedure for making follow-up contacts, and when the survey starts, have little to do besides processing incoming questionnaires and preparing the next mailing. In contrast to telephone and face-to-face surveys, mail surveys do not require decision-making on an immediate, high pressure basis.

Another strength of mail surveys is that they are relatively less sensitive to sampling error. Because of lower staff requirements, the extra cost of sending out and processing more mail questionnaires is lower than conducting additional telephone or face-to-face interviews. Therefore, researchers on a tight budget may be less inclined to cut costs by decreasing sample size and increasing sampling error.

Mail surveys -- especially when they are done locally, in small communities -- offer another advantage as well. It is easier for most respondents to answer personal questions in writing than face-to-face with an interviewer *they may actually know*. The mail questionnaire is a more anonymous vehicle for giving information about income, mental health, political attitudes, and a host of other issues people consider private.

A final strength of mail surveys is that they are less sensitive to biases introduced by interviewers as well as to the tendency for respondents to give answers they think the interviewer *wants* to hear. As we'll see below, these kinds of measurement errors can be very serious with both telephone and face-to-face surveys.

The greatest weakness of mail surveys stems from their sensitivity to

noncoverage error, as the *Literary Digest* example in Chapter 3 illustrates. Published lists, from which samples are often drawn for mail surveys, are almost never complete. For example, lists of television owners, telephone subscribers, utility users, or car owners are typically incomplete for a variety of reasons: some members of the population don't have televisions, telephones, or utilities; others keep their names off the lists to maintain privacy; and finally, the lists are often out of date. Even when such lists are *relatively* complete, they are very likely confidential and not available to survey researchers.[2]

A second weakness of mail surveys is that some people are less likely to respond to the questionnaire than others. Hence, mail surveys are sensitive to nonresponse error. People who receive a mail questionnaire have the chance to examine it before deciding to respond; their interest in the topic will very likely affect this decision. For example, people who are concerned about the environment may be more likely to complete a mail questionnaire about their purchases of pre-packaged fruit and vegetables. Those who are less concerned about the environment -- and more likely to buy pre-packaged produce -- may consider the survey a waste of time. The result is that respondents are different from nonrespondents in a way that affects the survey results.

Another reason why people may not respond to a mail survey is that they can't read the questionnaire, follow its instructions, or provide written answers. If these nonrespondents are less educated or older than respondents, for example, the survey results may be biased. But testing for this bias -- which we call nonresponse error -- in mail surveys is extremely difficult. Survey researchers have no way of knowing the characteristics of nonrespondents without making a personal contact.

People who have trouble understanding a mail questionnaire or answering questions in writing may respond anyway, but do so inaccurately. Consider, for example, an excerpt from a recent mail survey:

[Insert an example of a series of questions with a complicated skip pattern.]

A series of questions like this confuses respondents and can result in measurement error. The key is -- instructions in mail questionnaires should be kept simple and easy to follow. We'll talk about ways to do this in Chapter 7.

Another weakness of mail surveys is that researchers have little control over what happens to the questionnaire after it is mailed. They can't be sure the correct person in the household or business fills out the form or whether the

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[2]TDM, pp. 42-44.

intended respondent receives advice from others in answering the questions. For example, even though a questionnaire clearly states that the owner of a business should answer the questions, he or she may designate an employee to do the job. And even though the instructions may state that researchers are interested in the opinions of the oldest member of the household, he or she may ask someone else for their opinion. These are important problems because researchers have no way of knowing when they occur and so are helpless to prevent them.

Researchers also cannot control whether mailed questionnaires are filled out completely. Respondents may purposely skip over difficult and boring questions, or inadvertently overlook some items. Both cases of "item nonresponse" are easier to avoid in telephone and face-to-face surveys.

In summary, then, mail surveys are best suited to:

- Surveying populations for whom researchers have a reliable address list and who are likely to respond accurately and completely in writing;
- Surveys in which an immediate turnaround is not required; and
- Projects in which money, qualified staff, and professional help are all relatively scarce.

Telephone Surveys

The greatest strength of telephone surveys is their ability to produce results quickly. Companies like Gallup use telephones to conduct public opinion polls during a 1 or 2 day period and report results almost immediately. Smaller survey organizations also take advantage of the rapid turnaround offered by telephone surveys.

There are several reasons why telephone surveys can produce results more quickly than other methods. First, interviewers who use a telephone can complete more interviews in a given time period than those who must physically travel to someone's house or business. Whereas a good telephone interviewer can complete three 30-minute interviews during a three-hour calling period, the same person doing a face-to-face interview might only be able to complete one.

Second, if the survey is conducted at a central facility equipped with a bank of telephones, a supervisor can deal immediately with any problems that arise. If a particular question in the survey causes problems or if a respondent wants assurance of confidentiality from someone other than the interviewer, the supervisor can respond quickly. The same problems occurring in a mail or face-to-

face survey can delay the process by days or even weeks.

Third, a technique called computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) can save even more time. CATI systems display questionnaires on individual computer screens. Once a respondent is reached on the telephone, the interviewer reads each question from his or her screen, types answers into the computer, and waits for the next question to appear automatically. The time consuming process of transferring information from the questionnaire into the computer is completely avoided. (We'll talk about how to set up a CATI system in Chapter 10.)

In addition to quick turnaround, telephone surveys offer the advantage of greater interviewer control. In contrast to mail surveys, interviewers using the telephone can ask to speak with the person they want to answer the questionnaire, encourage the respondent to answer all the questions, and avoid the influence of others in the household or business.

The cost of telephone surveys is generally in between that of face-to-face and mail surveys; its two main components are labor and long distance charges. Face-to-face surveys have higher labor costs than telephone surveys because fewer interviews can be completed in a given time period. Mail surveys have lower labor costs because respondents rather than interviewers fill out the questionnaires. They also don't entail long distance telephone charges.

Telephone surveys are not without weaknesses, of course. The greatest is that *not all people have telephones*. Hence, a subgroup of the population is automatically left off the frame from which a sample is drawn. Since 93 percent of all people in the U.S. live in households with telephones, this is not a serious problem for nationwide surveys of the general public. However, it is a *major* drawback for surveying certain groups of people. Those who live in the South and in rural areas are much less likely to have telephones than the general public, as are those who have not completed high school, are black, have low income, live in large households, or are unemployed. For example, about 24 percent of Southerners who have less than a high school education have no telephone; the same is true for 27 percent of all people in the U.S. whose income is below the poverty level.[3]

Another reason researchers have been deterred from conducting telephone surveys is that telephone directories -- the easiest lists from which to draw samples -- are incomplete. One-in-five households in the U.S. moves every year (check with D) so directories are inevitably out-of-date. In addition, some households have unlisted numbers (although fewer in rural than urban areas). And

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[3]Groves, Robert M. *et al*, Telephone Survey Methodology, John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1988.

increasingly, more households have more than one listing -- one for each spouse, for example. Each of these situations presents a problem to the surveyor who would ideally like every member of the population to have an equal (or known) chance of being selected in the sample.

Fortunately, a technique called random digit dialing (RDD) enables researchers to overcome incomplete and inaccurate directory problems. RDD makes it possible to access both listed and unlisted numbers by using a computer to randomly generate telephone numbers. Special techniques enable researchers to reach one working number for as few as every tow or three calls. We explain how to use RDD in Chapter 8.

Other problems with telephone surveys can be harder to overcome. The first is that an experienced person must supervise the interviewers, especially those with no survey experience. The supervisor inevitably deals with a host of *What do I do now?* questions, for example:

> "A new family lives in one of the houses in our sample. Do I interview them or track down the original residents?"
>
> "The respondent only has time to talk to us at 6:30 tomorrow morning. Will someone be here to conduct the interview?"
>
> "We're supposed to interview renters in this survey. But these people pay in kind instead of cash. Do they qualify?"

An accurate telephone survey can't be done without an experienced supervisor to answer these kinds of questions.

Other problems with telephone surveys have to do with their ability to collect accurate information and avoid measurement error. Telephone interviews depend completely on what can be communicated vocally. To understand questions, the respondent must concentrate on each word or phrase and remember it. Questions in which the respondent is asked to rank a series of items are very difficult to use over the phone. The same is true of questions that depend on maps or diagrams. Compounding the problem is that interviewers cannot observe respondents' reactions for clues as to whether questions are understood.

And finally, respondents in telephone surveys can easily be influenced by leading questions from the interviewer ("Don't you think that ...?") and by what the respondent thinks the interviewer wants to hear. Many people give answers they think are socially acceptable, whether the question has to do with income, religious beliefs, drug use, or education level. As we'll see in Chapter 6, researchers can take steps to avoid this kind of "social desirability" bias by

wording questions as neutrally as possible.

In sum, telephone surveys are best suited to:

- Surveying populations who are very likely to have telephones;
- For questions that are relatively simple;
- When professional help is available; and
- When quick turnaround is important.

Face-to-Face Surveys

Before the 1970s, face-to-face interviews were the *only* ones with any scientific credibility. They were thought to yield unrivaled response rates, allow for the lengthiest questionnaires, and collect the most accurate data.

Advances in mail and telephone surveys and high labor costs have taken the sheen off face-to-face interviews in the last 15 years. However, surveys in which the respondent has personal, one-on-one contact with the interviewer still offer enormous advantages *under certain circumstances*. Specifically, face-to-face interviews are uniquely suited to surveying populations for whom there is no list, or who are not likely to respond willingly or accurately by phone or mail.

A recent survey of workers in central Washington's food processing industry illustrates how, sometimes, the only logical choice is to conduct face-to-face interviews. In this case, a community development organization wanted to evaluate how employment in local food processing plants affected residents' income levels. Staff of the organization knew of no address list of people in the community that might be used to conduct a mail survey -- neither vehicle registration nor utility lists were likely to be complete. In addition, they suspected that many people who worked at low-wage jobs in the processing plants did not have telephones. So, from the perspective of drawing a representative sample of residents, the researchers could only conduct a face-to-face survey.

Another reason in favor of conducting personal interviews was the education level of the people who were to be surveyed. Most workers in the processing plants used to be migrant farm workers who had only recently "settled out" of the migrant stream. Researchers working on the survey concluded that many residents would be unable or not inclined to complete a questionnaire that appeared in the mail and included questions about their household income.

Researchers at the community development organization used what is called an "area frame" sampling technique. They delineated a geographical area in which they were interested, and, using maps from the Census Bureau (?), chose every tenth household for their sample. We'll describe area frame sampling in more detail in Chapter 8.

Face-to-face surveys avoid the difficult problem of finding a complete list, but only at a high cost in terms of money and time. Consider the worst case scenario: The interviewer travels to a home in the geographical area to which she has been assigned. (She can't call ahead to arrange a meeting because she has no phone number.) She arrives unannounced to conduct the interview. No one answers the doorbell, so she returns another day at a different time. This time, someone opens the door. The interviewer asks to speak to a particular person, say, the oldest member of the household. He is out of town and will not return for a week. The family doesn't have a phone, but now armed with a name and address, the interviewer sends an introductory letter to the person she wants to interview. Upon returning to the house eight days later, the interviewer meets a respondent who, after much cajoling, agrees to be interviewed a week later. Three visits and 16 days later, the interviewer finally fills out a questionnaire, at a very high cost to the project.

Expensive, time-consuming call-backs present the most serious problem when members of the sample are scattered over a large area. They are much less of a problem in small communities. For example, a one-in-four sample from a town of 3,000 households is much cheaper to conduct than a one-in-one hundred sample from a city of 750,000 households, even though both involve a sample size of 750.

Like telephone surveys, those conducted with the face-to-face method depend on enumerators who are schooled in the reason for the research, the format of the questionnaire, and sound interviewing techniques. It is possible to train inexperienced people in an intensive 2 or 3 day workshop before the survey begins. However, the researchers' job will be much easier if they can find people who have worked as interviewers before, perhaps for the Census or other government surveys. The cost of using untrained people is a high degree of measurement error.

A good supervisor is also a must for face-to-face surveys.
Even the best trained interviewers run into problems that need immediate attention from a supervisor. And the work of those without experience must be monitored daily to make sure questionnaires are filled out completely and clearly. One interviewer who makes a consistent error over and over again can ruin the reliability of an entire survey. We'll talk about how to supervise face-to-face surveys and train interviewers in Chapter 10.

The temptation to cut costs in a face-to-face survey can be extremely high. Unfortunately, cost-cutting may carry a high price in terms of error: Decreasing sample size may inflate the sampling error; substituting someone besides the intended respondent (in order to avoid another visit) or using cheaper, unskilled interviewers will very likely increase measurement error. For these reasons, the decision to use the face-to-face method must be grounded in an adequate budget.

The cost of face-to-face surveys is high, but the strengths should not be overlooked. Interviewers have good control over who in the sampling unit serves as the respondent. They can increase the likelihood that people in the sample will agree to respond by explaining the importance of the survey and assuring them of its confidentiality. And they can ask complex questions using various aids such as xyz.

All in all, face-to-face surveys are best suited to:

- Surveying populations for whom there is no list, who are not likely to respond willingly or accurately (or cannot be reached) by mail or telephone;
- Surveys with complex questions; and
- Well-funded projects with experienced interviewers and supervisors.

Drop-Off Surveys: A Convenient Hybrid

One final option to consider in choosing a survey method is the drop-off survey, in which people go door-to-door, personally delivering questionnaires to individual households or businesses. The respondents complete the questionnaires on their own and return them by mail.

Drop-off surveys combine the low-labor costs of mail surveys with the personal contact of face-to-face interviews. They are especially well-suited to small community or neighborhood surveys in which respondents are not spread over large areas. One surveyor can deliver up to ten questionnaires in an hour -- knocking on each door, explaining the purpose of the survey, and asking the correct person to fill out and return the form. [D: this still sounds unrealistically high to me.]

To make the most of a drop-off survey, we recommend that surveyors only leave questionnaires with the intended respondents, rather than in mail boxes or with people who must convey the purpose of the survey to someone else. Personal contact enables the surveyor to encourage respondents to complete the

questionnaire. It also gives the survey a human face.

What About Response Rates?

The term "response rate" refers to the proportion of people in a particular sample who participate in the survey. If 70 people in a sample of 100 return a questionnaire, the response rate is 70%.

There was once a time when response rate was the only criterion used to choose between methods, and almost always, face-to-face surveys won out. The mail and telephone options were usually rejected because researchers hadn't learned how to achieve high response rates without making personal contacts. Now however, we understand better *why people respond to surveys*, and this understanding enables us to achieve equally high response rates using any of the three methods. In a mail survey, for example, personalized cover letters, attractive questionnaires, and follow-up contacts can yield response rates as high as xxx.

Hence, potential response rate has become a much less important criterion to use in selecting a survey method. There is an exception however, and it has to do with money. The last few responses that nudge the response rate higher are the most expensive to secure. Consider a face-to-face survey of 200 households. The first 100 interviews may be completed with a minimum of effort because the respondents were the easiest to contact. The next 100 interviews cost more because respondents weren't home the first few times the enumerator stopped by, or needed more assurance of confidentiality from survey organizers, or a host of other reasons. The cost of each additional interview is very high. The researchers will likely be tempted to stop trying after the first 100 interviews are complete -- with a response rate of only 50 percent.

Contrast this situation with a mail survey of the same 200 households. The cost of securing the last 100 responses is lower because follow-up is done with letters, perhaps supplemented by phone calls. The researchers are much less tempted to stop with a 50 percent response rate.

The key is this: With a *fixed amount of money*, a higher response rate is easier to achieve with telephone and mail surveys than with face-to-face interviews. When we disregard the cost issue, similar responses rates can be achieved with all three methods.

What Does the Future Hold?

[Maybe include a section on the advantages and problems with mixed mode surveys. Not done yet.]

Examples of Research Conducted by Rural Nonprofit Groups

The **Columbia Basin Institute** (CBI), a community organizing project in central Washington, is beginning a study of how the food processing industry affects the well-being of local residents. The objective of the study is to learn whether people in the Columbia River Basin benefit from current economic development efforts that encourage growth in food processing. By learning more about the impacts of this industry, CBI can better represent local residents in state-level policy discussions about future development strategies in their community.

Some of the specific questions CBI will try to answer are: What kinds of jobs are available in the industry, and at what wages? What is the relationship between jobs in the food processing industry and the level and stability of household income among local residents? What is the outlook for the industry?

Oregon Child Care Resource and Referral Network (OCCRRN), an alliance of eleven child care organizations, is assessing the supply and demand for child care services in Oregon. The goals of the project are to set up and operate a uniform data system on child care, and then to analyze and report information to state and local policy makers.

In order to set up a useful data system, OCCRRN first identified key public policy questions that need to be answered for every community, for example, how many families need child care? How much can they afford to pay? And, what is the quality of child care services that are available? Next, OCCRRN determined which published data sources would enable them to answer their questions, and which new information they would have to collect themselves. OCCRRN is now assembling this information and beginning their analysis.

Women and Employment (W&E) is a community-based group organized to improve the economic well-being of West Virginia's poor and minority women. W&E's most recent research took the form of a planning study on apprenticeship programs in the building trades. The goal of the study was to clarify the apprenticeship issues that are most important to W&E, translate these issues into "researchable" questions, and design a research project. The product of the study was a full research proposal for which W&E is now seeking funding.

Washington State University
Research Capacity Initiative
Department of Agricultural Economics
Pullman, WA 99164-6210

Research Skills Workshop

Research Training for
Rural Development Practitioners
in
Idaho, Oregon, and Washington

July 17 - 19, 1991
Franciscan Renewal Center
Portland, Oregon

Training in *hands-on* research skills, including how to:

- Frame useful questions
- Design research projects
- Conduct surveys
- Organize focus groups
- Use research consultants
- Find financial support for research

Designed for rural, nonprofit organizations involved in economic development and natural resource issues

Sponsored by:

- The Research Capacity Initiative at Washington State University, a pilot project of the Ford Foundation and the Aspen Institute's Rural Economic Policy Program

With assistance from:

- Idaho Cooperative Extension System
- Oregon State University Extension Service
- Western Rural Development Center

ATTACHMENT D

PURPOSE

The goal of the workshop is to help rural, nonprofit groups in the Pacific Northwest frame answerable, policy research questions that advance their overall goals, and then to assist the groups in designing individual research projects.

Participants' transportation and lodging expenses will be covered by the Research Capacity Initiative.

ELIGIBILITY

Applicants can be public or private, but must be not-for-profit and working on rural, public interest issues. Their objective can be service delivery, community development, and/or advocacy, and their focus can be development strategies, natural resources, or human resources. Seven to ten organizations will be selected to participate in the workshop, based on their experience and interest in research. We would like to work with groups that have policy questions they want to answer, but lack the necessary skills or contacts. Our goal will be to select groups who share common interests in terms of subject matter.

FORMAT

The workshop will begin with dinner and introductions on the evening of July 17th. Formal sessions on July 18th and the morning of July 19th will focus on specific skills *applied to* participants' individual research concerns. Sessions will be led by researchers who have both the necessary subject matter expertise and experience working with action and advocacy groups.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Interested applicants should complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it by May 24, 1991 to:

Priscilla Salant, Director
Research Capacity Initiative
Department of Agricultural Economics
Washington State University
Pullman, WA 99164-6210

Finalists will be notified by June 17th, 1991.

We encourage applicants who have questions about the workshop to call any one of the organizers at 509/335-2926 (Anita Waller, Research Capacity Initiative), 208/885-6639 (Corrine Lyle, University of Idaho), or 503/737-1432 or 2942 (Bruce Weber, Oregon State University).

Organizations selected to participate in the workshop will be asked to do some preparation. By July 1st, participants will circulate a 1-2 page description of their organization's research needs and interests. These descriptions will help groups become familiar with each other beforehand, so they can concentrate on applying new research skills during the sessions.

THE RESEARCH CAPACITY INITIATIVE

The RCI is a pilot project of the Ford Foundation, sponsored by the Rural Economic Policy Program of the Aspen Institute. Its overall objectives are to provide research assistance to rural development practitioners and to facilitate their work with experienced researchers. It is hoped that such collaborative work will broaden our practical understanding of the complex problems faced by rural communities and promote policy changes that will improve economic and environmental well-being.

Specifically, the program seeks to:

- Strengthen the research capacity of public interest, rural development organizations, thereby enabling them to develop more effective strategies and participate in policy discussions;
- Encourage and support collaborative research by rural development organizations and experienced researchers; and
- Provide rural policy researchers with a clearer perspective of issues and problems faced by development practitioners.

RCI has matched a number of rural, public interest organizations from around the country with researchers who have experience that fit the groups' specific interests. The researchers act as consultants, helping the groups to identify important questions and to carry out their research projects.

In May 1990, Island Press published RCI's *A Community Researcher's Guide to Rural Data*, a comprehensive manual that describes and illustrates easy-to-find secondary data. A second book, *Conducting Surveys: A Guide for Community Researchers*, will be available in late 1991.

For more information, please call Anita Waller, Project Assistant, at 509/335-2926.

ATTACHMENT E

Research Skills Workshop

Research Training for
Rural Development Practitioners

July 17 - 19, 1991
Franciscan Renewal Center
Portland, Oregon

Program

Wednesday, July 17

5:00 PM	Check in, refreshments
5:30-8:00 PM	Dinner, welcome (Priscilla Salant) Opening presentation -- "Practitioners and Public Policy: Research as the Missing Link" (Bobbie Weber)

Thursday, July 18

7:30-8:00 AM	Breakfast
8:15-9:15 AM	Session 1: The Starting Point -- How to Define Information Needs and Frame Useful Research Questions (Bruce Weber)
9:15-10:00 AM	Session 2: How to Plan a Research Project (Brent Steel)
10:15-11:00	Session 2: Continued
11:00-Noon	Session 3: Demographic and Economic Data -- What is Available and Where is It? (Priscilla Salant)
Noon-1:15 PM	Lunch and break
1:15-3:00 PM	Session 4: Conducting a Survey -- Is it Right For Your Organization? (Priscilla Salant)
3:15-4:15 PM	Session 5: Focus Groups -- When Are They Useful and How Are They Organized? (David Morgan)
4:15-5:00 PM	Session 6: Interpreting and Using New Information (Corinne Lyle)
5:30-6:30 PM	Dinner
7:30 PM	Demonstration of HandsNet -- A Personal Computer Network for Nonprofits (Anita Waller and Julie Marx)

Friday, July 19

7:30-8:00 AM	Breakfast
8:00-10:00 AM	Session 7: Planning a Research Project for Your Organization. Break out groups -- 1 Economic development (Bruce Weber) 2 Tourism strategies (Priscilla Salant) 3 Pesticide issues (Alan Cooper) 4 Service delivery and advocacy: Identifying your clientele and their needs (Corinne Lyle) 5 Health care (Chad Cheriel)
10:15-10:45 AM	Session 8: How to Find and Use Professional Research Help (Priscilla Salant)
10:45-11:30 AM	Session 9: How to Find Funding for Research (Julie Marx)
11:30-Noon	Wrap-up
Noon	Lunch and adjourn

Session Leaders

Chad Cheriel	Office of Health Policy, State of Oregon
Alan Cooper	International Plant Protection Center, Oregon State University
Corinne Lyle	Cooperative Extension Service, University of Idaho
Julie Marx	Rural Economic Policy Program, The Aspen Institute
David Morgan	Institute on Aging, Portland State University
Priscilla Salant	Research Capacity Initiative, Washington State University and The Aspen Institute
Brent Steel	Department of Political Science, Oregon State University
Anita Waller	Research Capacity Initiative, Washington State University
Bobbie Weber	Oregon Child Care Resource and Referral Network
Bruce Weber	Department of Agriculture and Resource Economics, Oregon State University

Workshop Participants

Ruma Perez	Centro Cultural, Cornelius, Oregon
Kevin Cooper	Northeast Oregon Economic Development District, La Grande, Oregon
Rich Rohde	Rogue Valley Fair Share, Medford, Oregon
Sylvia Markley	Challis Economic Development Committee Challis, Idaho
Gwendolyn Bane	Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides, Eugene, Oregon
Barbara Burke	Montana Women's Economic Development Group, Missoula, Montana
Susan Lind	CASA of Oregon, Newberg, Oregon
Bill Edelblute	Clearwater Economic Development Association, Lewiston, Idaho
Joe Chrastil	Washington Rural Organizing Project, Spokane, Washington
Beverly Moore	SALUD-Safe Alternatives for Farm Laborers, Phoenix, Oregon
Betsy Dunklin	Idaho Women's Network, Boise, Idaho
Rodney Page	Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, Portland, Oregon
George Shannon	Buhl Economic Development Council, Buhl, Idaho

ATTACHMENT F

PRISCILLA SALANT
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September 1991

Professional Experience

Associate in Research
Washington State University, Department of Agricultural Economics, 1988 to present

Director, Research Capacity Initiative
Washington State University, Department of Agricultural Economics, 1988 to present

Visiting Fellow, Arkleton Trust Research
Consultant to Arkleton Trust, for "Rural Change in Europe: Research Programme of Farm Structures and Pluriactivity," Nethy Bridge, Scotland, June 1990

Private Consultant
Salant and Associates, 1987 to 1988

Economist
Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, stationed at University of Wisconsin-Madison (1983-1986) and Mississippi State University (1979-1983). Adjunct Instructor at both universities.

Research Assistant
University of Arizona, Department of Agricultural Economics, 1978-1979

Economist
Farmer Cooperative Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington D.C., 1977-1978

Education

B.S. in Economics
University of California-Berkeley, 1975

M.A. in Agricultural Economics
University of Arizona, 1979

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INTRODUCTION

The Research Capacity Initiative began as a pilot project in January 1989. Its overall objectives are to provide research assistance to rural development practitioners and to facilitate their collaboration with experienced researchers.

Specifically, the program seeks to:

- strengthen the research capacity of public interest, rural development organizations, thereby enabling them to develop effective strategy and become more involved in advocating for policy changes;
- encourage and support collaborative research by public interest groups and experienced researchers; and
- provide rural policy researchers with a clearer perspective of issues and problems faced by development practitioners.

The four strategies used to accomplish these objectives are:

- supporting collaborative research between carefully selected researchers and rural development organizations;
- writing and distributing manuals intended to strengthen research capacity;
- conducting research skills workshops; and
- providing researcher and publication referrals on request.

The rationale for the project is that community-based and intermediary organizations play an important role in improving social and economic conditions in rural communities. One way these groups can make their scarce resources more productive is to use research to inform their development work.

Two of the groups RCI has worked with illustrate how research can provide groups with an entré into the policy arena:

> Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (CEI) is a community development corporation formed in 1977 to better the lives of low income, rural people in Maine. In the course of planning work funded by the Ford Foundation, CEI recently conducted a mail survey of small businesses to become better informed about their characteristics and need for

assistance. Because CEI took the time and money to study this population, its staff members can now take an informed position in current credit policy discussions with Maine's banking industry. The state's largest bank is attempting to become more responsive to small businesses and now looks to CEI for information that will help them achieve their goal.

Oregon Child Care Resource and Referral Network (OCCRRN) is a two-year old alliance of eleven child care agencies located primarily in the state's rural areas. It was organized, in part, to provide information to the Oregon Child Care Commission, a governor-appointed task force. OCCRRN developed a model and collected data to estimate the supply of and demand for child care in Oregon. The group is now in the unique position of having not only the state legislature's attention, but also of being able to answer key policy questions about how many children in the state need care, what kind of care their families are using, and families' ability to pay for that care.

Having worked directly with CEI, OCCRRN, and roughly 25 other rural development groups, RCI's pilot phase is over. We have tried all 4 strategies and evaluated our progress. This proposal describes our achievements, suggests improvements in how we work, and requests supplemental funding to continue operating the project for one additional year, from December 1, 1991 to November 30, 1992.

LESSONS FROM THE PILOT PROJECT

Because RCI was set up as an experiment, it is very important to step back and consider what has been accomplished and how the program should work in the future. In August 1991, we evaluated each of our four strategies. Our findings are summarized below.

Strategy 1: Collaborative Research

In helping rural development groups meet their research needs, our primary strategy has been to support carefully selected researchers to work with groups on specific projects. Staff work involves:

- reviewing proposals in the form of written requests for assistance from development groups;