2016

RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Center for
Rural Pennsylvania
A Legislative Agency of the Pennsylvania General Assembly
The Center for Rural Pennsylvania is a bipartisan, bicameral legislative agency that serves as a resource for rural policy research within the Pennsylvania General Assembly. It was created in 1987 under Act 16, the Rural Revitalization Act, to promote and sustain the vitality of Pennsylvania’s rural and small communities.
THE CENTER FOR RURAL PENNSYLVANIA
2016 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Center for Rural Pennsylvania is a bipartisan, bicameral legislative agency that serves as a resource for rural policy research within the Pennsylvania General Assembly. The Center’s mission is to promote and sustain the vitality of the state’s rural and small communities by:

- administering grants to conduct research on matters relating to rural conditions;
- maintaining and disseminating a broad base of information on rural trends and conditions;
- publishing research and project results; and
- sponsoring regional and statewide forums on rural issues.

As part of the Center’s yearly Research Grant Program, the Board of Directors approves topics for research projects. All projects must show a clear relationship to one or more of the Center’s mandated research areas, which are:

- rural people and communities;
- economic development;
- local government finance and administration;
- community services;
- natural resources and the environment;
- rural values and social change;
- educational outreach;
- agriculture; and
- health and welfare concerns.

Eligibility

The Center’s enabling legislation allows the Center to award grants to qualified faculty members of Pennsylvania State University, the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) universities, and the regional campuses of the University of Pittsburgh. A qualified faculty member must serve as the project director. Partnerships with other academic institutions, community organizations, and public and private agencies are encouraged.

Research Grant Program

One-year grants are awarded to conduct applied policy research or to identify local strategies that can result in legislative or program policy considerations or recommendations. For the 2016 grant cycle, the maximum allowable grant award is $50,000 per project.

**Targeted Topics**

This year the Board of Directors has approved six targeted topics. The list of topics begins on Page 6.

**Open Topics**

Other reasonable and beneficial projects that address one or more of the Center’s mandated research areas (see above) will be considered by the Center under the Open Topics category.
Mini Grant Program

Mini Grants are awarded to projects that focus on basic data collection and analysis, time-sensitive issues, and/or the preparation of reference materials. Projects supported as Mini Grants are a maximum of nine months in duration and are eligible for a maximum of $15,000 in Center support.

Targeted Topics

This year the Board of Directors has approved 10 Mini Grant targeted topics. The list of topics begins on Page 8.

Open Topics

Open topics will also be accepted for Mini Grants.

Grant Application Process

The Center’s 2016 Research Grant Program application process is as follows:

1. Request for Proposals released. March 2015
2. Deadline for submission of Letters of Intent. May 1, 2015
3. Letters of Intent are reviewed and selected applicants are invited to submit a full proposal. June 2015
4. Proposal planning discussions are conducted with applicants. July-August 2015
5. Deadline for full proposal submission. August 28, 2015
6. Center’s Board of Directors selects projects for funding. December 2015
7. Final work plans are negotiated and accepted. December 2015
8. Cooperative Agreements are issued and work begins. January 2016

Letters of Intent

As the first step in the grant application process, researchers must submit a Letter of Intent. No full proposal will be accepted without the submission, and Board approval, of a Letter of Intent. Each letter is reviewed to determine its potential to support the Center’s research mandate. Applicants meeting that benchmark will be invited to prepare and submit a full grant proposal. The Letter of Intent process is the same for both the traditional Research Grant Program and the Mini Grant Program. Those applicants whose Letters of Intent are approved for full proposal submission will receive additional information and instructions on full proposal preparation, submission and review procedures.

A Letter of Intent must include the cover sheet and is limited to three additional typewritten pages.

The Letter of Intent narrative must include the following:
- project description;
- scope of work to be undertaken;
- anticipated policy implications (for full research projects only); and
- identification of partners and/or subcontractors.

Letters of Intent must be received in the Center for Rural Pennsylvania office, either in hard copy, via email or fax, by the close of business (4:30 p.m.) on Friday, May 1, 2015.
**Letter of Intent Submission Guidelines**
Letters of intent may be mailed, emailed or faxed to the Center for Rural Pennsylvania.

1. **Hard Copy**
   Submit the original Letter of Intent and **four** copies to:

   Mary Kandray Gelenser  
   Program Manager for Grants  
   The Center for Rural Pennsylvania  
   625 Forster St., Room 902  
   Harrisburg, PA 17120

2. **Email**
   Download the cover sheet from the Center for Rural Pennsylvania website at www.rural.palegislature.us and email the completed cover sheet and the narrative of the Letter of Intent to Mary Kandray Gelenser at: gelensermk@rural.palegislature.us.

3. **Fax**
   A Letter of Intent may also be faxed to Mary Kandray Gelenser at (717) 772-3587. Please follow up fax submissions with a telephone call to confirm that the fax has been received and is readable.

Receipt of a Letter of Intent will be acknowledged via email. If acknowledgement is not received in three business days from the date of sending, please call (717) 787-9555 to follow up.

*All Letters of Intent must be received in the office of the Center for Rural Pennsylvania no later than the close of business (4:30 p.m.) on Friday, May 1, 2015.*
TARGETED TOPICS FOR THE 2016 GRANT PROGRAM

Analysis of Emergency Medical Services Personnel in Pennsylvania

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Health’s Bureau of Emergency Medical Services (BEMS) approximately 60,000 EMS personnel and more than 1,000 licensed ground and air ambulance services respond to more than 1 million patients each year in Pennsylvania’s EMS delivery system. Using current BEMS licensure data, this research will profile Pennsylvania’s rural and urban emergency medical services personnel. It will determine barriers to and opportunities for recruitment and retention to provide a better understanding of the current and future status of emergency medical services personnel in Pennsylvania.

Key Expected Outcomes:
- Profiles of rural and urban emergency medical services personnel by type of certification, active or inactive status, volunteer vs. paid employment, tenure, training, demographics and other characteristics.
- Identification of barriers to and opportunities for recruitment and retention of emergency medical services personnel in rural and urban Pennsylvania.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

Examination of Local Parks and Recreation Areas in Rural Pennsylvania

A needs assessment conducted for the development of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources’ Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan found that rural communities lack local parks and recreation areas. This research will identify barriers to the development of local parks and recreation areas as well as opportunities for enhancing outdoor recreational venues and programs in rural Pennsylvania.

Key Expected Outcomes:
- Identification and comparison of local parks and recreation facilities that are available to and used by rural residents.
- Analyses of municipal budgets and current capacity as they relate to the development of park and recreation facilities and the delivery of services in rural communities.
- Identification of support, including financial, technical and programming, from public and private sources to assist in providing recreational venues and programs.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

Examination of Community Health Workers in Rural Pennsylvania

Community health workers (CHWs) promote health and nutrition and are distinguished from other health professionals because their training and focus are on education and health system navigation rather than the direct provision of health care services. They may be paid or volunteer and may be social workers, community EMTs, other types of professional personnel, or trained community members. This research will document the current use of CHWs in rural Pennsylvania and determine the feasibility of expanding the use of CHWs in rural areas to improve the health outcomes of residents.

Key Expected Outcomes:
- Identification of the types of organizations using CHWs as well as their geographic service areas in rural Pennsylvania.
- Profile of CHWs in rural Pennsylvania, including job titles, education/training, employment status, and relevant demographic information.
• Identification of barriers to and opportunities for increasing the use of CHWs in health care teams in rural Pennsylvania.
• Analysis of models (financial, organizational, and otherwise) for using CHWs in rural areas in Pennsylvania.
• Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

Wildlife Tourism on Public Lands in Pennsylvania
State game lands and other public lands in Pennsylvania are visited increasingly by the public for non-consumptive uses, such as bird and other wildlife watching. This research will examine the extent to which the general public participates in these and other wildlife tourism activities on public land in Pennsylvania.

Key Expected Outcomes:
• Estimation of the number and a demographic profile of people who engage in non-consumptive wildlife activities in Pennsylvania.
• Analyses of where the activities are taking place, in terms of regions and public and private lands, and of whether or not users are aware of the ownership status (public or private) of the land they access for wildlife tourism.
• Analysis of attitudes toward paying for access to state game lands for non-consumptive uses.
• Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

Impact of the Biggert-Waters Flood Reform Act and the Homeowners Flood Insurance Affordability Act on Rural and Urban Pennsylvania Communities
Property owners in more than 1,000 municipalities in Pennsylvania participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. As a result of the Biggert-Waters Act of 2012 (BW12) and the Homeowners Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2014 (HFIAA), changes to the flood insurance program could dramatically increase flood insurance rates for these property owners. This research will examine the economic impact on property owners and on municipalities should these acts be fully implemented. Additionally, this research will develop insurance cost-saving scenarios based on various flood mitigation efforts and options.

Key Expected Outcomes:
• Profile of the number and type of properties that are enrolled in the National Flood Insurance Program.
• Estimation of the number and type of properties in Pennsylvania affected by BW12 and the HFIAA.
• Estimation of the current and future flood insurance rates after full implementation of the laws.
• Insurance cost-saving scenarios based on various flood mitigation efforts and options.
• Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

Examination of Efforts to Revitalize and Sustain Pennsylvania’s River Towns
River towns and corridors are and have been an integral part of Pennsylvania’s commercial and industrial economy. With the decline of many of their core industries, river town communities are revitalizing these corridors through efforts that promote, preserve and enhance culture, heritage and related commerce and recreational activities. Examples include Susquehanna Greenways Partnerships’ Revitalizing River Towns Program, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council’s River Town Program, and Allegheny Ridge Corporation’s Pittsburgh-to-Harrisburg Main Line Canal Greenway. This research will document the economic and community impact of these and other efforts and identify barriers and opportunities to successful implementation.
Key Expected Outcomes:

- Inventory of organizations and communities engaged in river town revitalization efforts in Pennsylvania.
- Catalog of initiatives, activities, and programming that are used in these river town revitalization efforts.
- Assessment of the impact of these river town initiatives, activities and programs over the past 5 years.
- Determination of barriers and opportunities to successful revitalization efforts.
- A guidebook that will assist other river towns in revitalization efforts.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

**OPEN TOPICS FOR THE 2016 RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM**

In addition to the targeted topics, other reasonable and potentially beneficial projects will be considered by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania under the Open Topics category. Proposed projects for this category must show a clear relationship to one or more of the Center’s mandated research areas listed on Page 3. Application procedures for proposed open topic projects must follow the Letter of Intent guidelines listed on Page 4. Open topic projects must define specific key outcomes and specific policy implications that will benefit communities in rural Pennsylvania.

**MINI GRANT TARGETED TOPICS FOR THE 2015 RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM**

**Analysis of DDAP Client Information System Data**

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP), substance abuse disorders impact one in four families in Pennsylvania. In 2012, DDAP was created to focus state efforts on substance abuse and use issues. This research will analyze DDAP client information data to include a profile of clients, identification and analysis of the use of drug treatment services and payment sources, and other relevant information. It will also include a comparison of these data for rural and urban Pennsylvania over the past 5 years.

Key Expected Outcomes:

- Profile of rural and urban clients who receive services from drug and alcohol program providers, including, age, gender, race, employment status, drug of choice and other relevant factors.
- Analysis of the types of treatment services used by rural and urban clients, including type of provider, in-patient or out-patient treatment, and other relevant information.
- Analysis of payment sources.
- Trend analysis of client, services and payment information over the past 5 years.

**Analysis of Mental Health Services in Pennsylvania**

According to the National Alliance for Mental Illness, close to 500,000 Pennsylvanians are living with serious mental illness. This research will analyze county mental health (MH) services data collected by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services to determine the number and characteristics of consumers, the types of services provided, expenditure patterns over time, and differences between rural and urban areas.

Key Expected Outcomes:

- Analyses of the number and characteristics of consumers, the types of services provided, expenditure patterns, and other relevant data over the past 5 years.
• Rural and urban comparison of MH data to determine differences, if any, between service delivery and consumer characteristics.

Unemployment and Underemployment in Pennsylvania
In 2006 the Center for Rural Pennsylvania published research that analyzed unemployment and underemployment in Pennsylvania. This research will update that report with another profile of rural and urban unemployed and underemployed workers in Pennsylvania. It will also provide county-level estimates of the number of unemployed and underemployed workers.

Key Expected Outcomes:
• County-level estimates of unemployment and underemployment for all counties in Pennsylvania.
• County-level analysis of the characteristics of persons who are unemployed or underemployed.
• Trend analysis of unemployment and underemployment during the past 5 years.

Analysis of Consumer Debt in Rural and Urban Pennsylvania
U.S. household debt, including mortgages, credit cards, auto loans and student loans increased to $11.65 trillion in 2014, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. According to 2012 data, Pennsylvania residents carry less of every type of debt, except student loan debt, compared to the country as a whole. This research will analyze data from the Federal Reserve and other sources to determine the levels of household and individual debt in rural and urban Pennsylvania.

Key Expected Outcomes:
• Estimation of the current amount and type of debt carried by rural and urban households and individuals in Pennsylvania.
• Trend analysis of the amount and type of debt carried by rural and urban Pennsylvania households and individuals.

Impact of Minimum Wage Increases in Rural and Urban Pennsylvania
According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, approximately 203,000 full-time, year-round workers in Pennsylvania are paid the minimum wage. Discussions on increasing the minimum wage are occurring at both the state and national levels. Using various hourly wage increase scenarios, this research will identify rural and urban industries that could be affected by changes to the minimum wage in Pennsylvania. Impacts may include potential business expansion or contraction, employee complements, and other potential results.

Key Expected Outcomes:
• Identification of the industries in rural and urban counties that currently pay minimum wage to a substantial proportion of their employees.
• Using various hourly wage increase scenarios, identification of the economic costs and benefits of changes to the minimum wage in Pennsylvania including identification of groups, businesses and individuals who would likely be significantly impacted.
• Using the same scenarios (mentioned above), estimation of the number of rural and urban Pennsylvanians who would benefit from minimum wage changes and a demographic profile of these individuals.
• Using the same scenarios (mentioned above), estimation of the impact of minimum wage changes on public income maintenance programs.
Analysis of Pennsylvania Crash Statistics Data
In 2013, there were 124,149 reportable traffic crashes in Pennsylvania. These crashes claimed the lives of 1,208 people and injured another 83,089 people. This research will analyze the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation crash statistics data for rural and urban Pennsylvania by municipality type, road type and condition, crash severity, demographics of drivers, and other relevant variables.

Key Expected Outcomes:
- Analysis of crash statistics data for rural and urban Pennsylvania by location, road type and conditions, crash severity, demographics of drivers and other relevant variables.
- Trend analysis of crash statistics data for rural and urban Pennsylvania for the past 5 years.
- Spatial analysis between crash sites and emergency services and medical providers, such as hospitals, ambulance and fire stations.

Public Transportation in Rural Pennsylvania
According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, more than 100,000 rural Pennsylvania households (8 percent) do not have access to a vehicle, a statistic that raises the importance of transportation options in rural communities. More than 40 rural counties in Pennsylvania provide some fixed route public transportation. This research will examine these rural public transportation systems to analyze ridership characteristics data, funding, operational costs, fleet characteristics, and other relevant information.

Key Expected Outcomes:
- Analysis of the characteristics of rural, fixed-route public transportation systems in Pennsylvania including ridership levels and profiles, funding components and cost of operation, fleet and route characteristics, and other relevant information.
- Identification of barriers to and opportunities for providing and expanding rural fixed-route transportation in rural Pennsylvania.
- Examples of diverse rural public transportation systems in Pennsylvania.

Income Maintenance Program Use in Rural and Urban Pennsylvania
According to 2015 data from the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, more than 4.3 million Pennsylvanians are enrolled in income maintenance programs. This research will analyze data for income maintenance program benefits in Pennsylvania counties and will profile rural and urban Pennsylvanians receiving income maintenance funds, such as SNAP, TANF and MA.

Key Expected Outcomes:
- Analysis of rural and urban enrollment trends for income maintenance programs over the past 5 years.
- Profile of rural and urban residents who use income maintenance programs in Pennsylvania.
- Gap analysis of persons who use income maintenance programs and those who are eligible for such programs in rural and urban Pennsylvania.
- Comparison of rural and urban enrollment and use of income maintenance programs in Pennsylvania.
Analysis of Changes in Homeownership in Pennsylvania’s Rural Small Cities and Boroughs
According to Census data, from 2000 to 2010, Pennsylvania’s small cities and boroughs had a 4.5 percent decline in homeownership. Using secondary data from a variety of sources, this research will analyze these changes and identify factors that have likely contributed to this decline.

Key Expected Outcomes:
- Identification of demographic, market and other factors that have a relationship with the decline in homeownership.
- Grouping of municipalities by the factors that have a relationship with homeownership rates (population change, housing demand, etc.).
- Projections of changes in homeownership rates in rural small cities and boroughs over the next 5 years.

Analysis of Community Foundations in Rural and Urban Pennsylvania
In 2011, community foundations in the U.S. invested an estimated $4.3 billion in a variety of nonprofit activities in fields that included the arts and education, health and human services, the environment, and disaster relief. In rural Pennsylvania, community foundations vary in size and service areas, with assets ranging from less than $5 million to more than $80 million. All are dedicated to improving the lives of people and the communities within their service areas. This research will analyze Pennsylvania’s community foundations to profile financing, investments and donor characteristics.

Key Expected Outcomes:
- Inventory of community foundations operating in rural and urban Pennsylvania, including staffing levels, budgets, service areas and other relevant information.
- Analysis of donor characteristics and demographics for community foundations in rural and urban Pennsylvania.
- Analysis of the funds held by community foundations including type, number and mix, such as categorical, and donor advised.
- Analysis of community foundation grant making over the past 5 years including priorities, types, number and amount of grants given.

OPEN TOPICS FOR THE 2015 MINI GRANT PROGRAM
Open topics will also be accepted for the Mini Grant Program. Proposed Mini Grant topics for this category should focus on basic data collection and analysis, time-sensitive issues and/or the preparation of reference materials. Mini Grant projects are to be a maximum of nine months in duration. Proposed Mini Grant projects must show a clear relationship to one or more of the Center’s mandated research areas listed on Page 3. Application procedures for proposed open Mini Grant projects must follow the Letter of Intent guidelines listed on Page 4.
### 2016 Letter of Intent Cover Sheet

**Project Title:**

**Project Director Name:**

**Host University:**

**Address:**

**Phone:**

**Fax:**

**Email Address:**

**Targeted Topic – List RFP Topic Addressed:**

**Open Topic – Indicate Subject Area Addressed By Selecting One Of The Areas Listed Below:**

- [ ] Rural People and Communities
- [ ] Local Government Finance and Administration
- [ ] Natural Resources and Environment
- [ ] Educational Outreach
- [ ] Economic Development
- [ ] Community Services
- [ ] Rural Values and Social Change
- [ ] Agriculture
- [ ] Health and Welfare Concerns

**Synopsis of Project:**

(50 word maximum)

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**2016 Estimated Budget:**

- [ ] Center for Rural Pennsylvania Funding
- [ ] Other (Cash/In-kind)
- [ ] 2016 Budget Total

**Project Duration:**

- [ ] Nine Months (Mini Grant)
- [ ] One Year
- [ ] Two Years
- [ ] Three Years

**Identified Partners or Subcontractors:**

**Project Director Signature:**

**Date:**