


2012 RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Center for

Rural Pennsylvania
A Legislative Agency of the Pennsylvania General Assembly

625 Forster Street, Room 902, Harrisburg, PA 17120
Phone (717) 787-9555 Fax (717) 772-3587 www.rural.palegislature.us

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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.

2012 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 and demonstration 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.

Focus

The Research Grant Program is focused on policy research. Proposals submitted under the program must include a discussion of state and local policy considerations and implications that may be affected by the project research findings, and describe any audiences that might have an interest in the project's results. Proposals should provide specific legislative, executive or other governing body actions that may be affected by the research.

Eligibility

The Center's enabling legislation requires that Center grants be awarded 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 identify local strategies that can result in legislative or program policy considerations or recommendations. Multiple-year projects may be financially supported for up to three years. However, grantees must submit annual proposals and must fulfill current year grant requirements. For the 2012 grant cycle, the maximum allowable grant award is \$50,000 per project.

Targeted Topics

This year the Board of Directors has approved 13 targeted topics. The list of topics starts 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 for 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 \$10,000 in Center support.

Targeted Topics

This year the Board has approved one targeted Mini Grant topic that is listed on Page 10.

Open Topics

Open topics will also be accepted for Mini Grants.

Grant Application Process

The Center's 2012 Research Grant Program application process is as follows:

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. Request for Proposals released. | April 2011 |
| 2. Deadline for submission of Letters of Intent. | June 17, 2011 |
| 3. Letters of Intent are reviewed and selected applicants are invited to submit a full proposal. | July 2011 |
| 4. Proposal planning discussions are conducted with applicants. | July-August 2011 |
| 5. Deadline for full proposal submission. | September 9, 2011 |
| 6. Center's Board of Directors selects projects for funding. | December 2011 |
| 7. Final work plans are negotiated and accepted. | December 2011 |
| 8. Cooperative Agreements are issued and work begins. | January 2012 |

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 approval of a Letter of Intent. Each letter is reviewed to determine its potential for supporting 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.

A Letter of Intent must include the cover sheet (included on the inside back cover and available on the Center's website at www.rural.palegislature.us), and is limited to a maximum of three additional typewritten pages. (Note: Applicants for the Multiyear Project, detailed on Page 9, may provide up to five typewritten pages.)

The Letter of Intent narrative must include the following:

- project description;
- scope of work to be undertaken;
- anticipated policy implications; and
- identification of partners and/or subcontractors.

Letters of Intent must be received in the Center for Rural Pennsylvania office in hard copy, or via email or fax, by the close of business (4:30 p.m.) on Friday, June 17, 2011.

Submission Guidelines - Letter of Intent

Hard Copy

Submit the original Letter of Intent and **four** copies to:

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

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

Email

1. Download and complete the cover sheet from the Center for Rural Pennsylvania website at www.rural.palegislature.us and email the completed cover sheet and the text of the Letter of Intent to Mary Kandray Gelenser at gelensermk@rural.palegislature.us.
2. An emailed Letter of Intent must be submitted in **Microsoft Word**. An emailed Letter of Intent submitted in another format cannot be accepted.
3. The acceptance of an emailed Letter of Intent will be acknowledged via return email. If the receipt of an emailed Letter of Intent has not been acknowledged within three business days of its submission, please call to check its status.

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.

All Letters of Intent must be received in the Center for Rural Pennsylvania office by the close of business (4:30 p.m.) on Friday, June 17, 2011.

Proposals

An applicant whose Letter of Intent is approved will be asked to submit a detailed proposal for his/her project. Proposals are due at the Center by close of business on Friday, September 9, 2011.

Proposals are evaluated on concept clarity, project methodology, impact on rural communities, financial viability, and policy implications. Grant awards are made by the Center's Board of Directors and are contingent upon appropriation by the General Assembly in the Commonwealth's 2011-2012 Budget. Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss concepts and project viability with Center personnel during the development of the Letter of Intent and full grant proposal.

Detailed proposal guidelines will be sent to each researcher whose Letter of Intent has been accepted. Proposals should be developed with a January 2012 start-up date and reflect a maximum 12-month work cycle for the Research Grant Program and up to a nine-month work cycle for Mini Grants. Proposals must be received in the office of the Center for Rural Pennsylvania by the close of business on Friday, September 9, 2011. All proposals submitted become the property of the Center for Rural Pennsylvania.

Content

Applicants whose Letter of Intent is approved will receive complete guidelines on the content requirements of the project proposal. Proposals must include the following information: needs statement and related research; goals and objectives; methodology; expected results and policy implications; budget (see following note); budget justification; and subcontractors.

Budget

For projects submitted for the 2012 Research Grant Program, the Center will provide payment for up to one-quarter faculty release time per semester (traditionally fall and spring) for faculty to work on Center-sponsored research. Payment will be authorized if the faculty researcher is being relieved from teaching or other professionally related duties requiring a replacement staff person to be hired. The Center will provide payment for replacement costs (salaries or wages of replacement staff including benefits). The Center will also provide for payment of summer stipends for faculty, based on the project schedule.

The Center will cover either a stipend or tuition costs for a student(s) working on the project, but not both for the same student(s) during the same semester. The maximum Center for Rural Pennsylvania research grant award is \$50,000 per project. The maximum for Mini Grants is \$10,000 per project.

The Center does not require a cash match from applicants for research grants. However, investment by other partners clearly represents support and belief in a proposed project; thus the commitment of matching cash or in-kind funding can offer a competitive advantage to an applicant. Applicants are reminded that host universities must contribute indirect overhead costs.

For more information about proposals or guidelines, contact Mary Kandray Gelenser, Program Manager for Grants, at (717) 787-9555 or gelensermk@rural.palegislature.us.

All Letters of Intent must be received in the Center for Rural Pennsylvania office by the close of business (4:30 p.m.) on Friday, June 17, 2011.

All proposals for the 2012 Research Grant Program must be received in the Center for Rural Pennsylvania office by the close of business (4:30 p.m.) on Friday, September 9, 2011.

TARGETED TOPICS FOR THE 2012 GRANT PROGRAM

Examination of Century Farms in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania has more than 4,000 preserved farms that are protected by conservation easements and almost 2,000 century farms that have been in the same family for more than 100 years. This research will use a previously-developed Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture instrument to determine factors contributing to the success of century farms that can be applicable to preserved and other farms.

Key expected outcomes:

- Identification of century farm agricultural practices, family management composition, transition planning and other characteristics.
- Comparison and analysis of findings of century farm survey results with prior surveys of preserved and other farms in Pennsylvania.
- Identification of factors, contributing to century farm viability, profitability and longevity.
- Identification of practices and strategies that Pennsylvania farmers can use to replicate the success of century farms.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

Models to Guide Implementation of Pennsylvania's Watershed Improvement Plans

With more stringent inspection of erosion and sedimentation (E&S) and manure management plans as a result of the mandates of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Improvement Plan, state and county conservation agencies are looking for methods, policies and practices that can encourage farmers to complete these plans. Other states have developed legislative and regulatory programs and practices that encourage E&S control and manure management planning. This research will identify innovative policies, practices and techniques that can be used in Pennsylvania to assist farmers in complying with state and federal watershed improvement regulations.

Key expected outcomes:

- Identification and assessment of models used in other states to encourage compliance with conservation mandates.
- Determination of which policies, practices and techniques would be appropriate for implementation in Pennsylvania to achieve higher conservation planning compliance levels among agricultural operations.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

Assessments of Methodologies to Determine Farms in Compliance with Conservation Plans

All farms in Pennsylvania are required to develop erosion and sediment control and manure management plans that are kept on the farm. However, it is not known how many farms are in compliance as there is no requirement for a central depository. This research will identify and assess methods that county conservation districts can use to determine the level of compliance with state conservation management practices. Estimation of compliance is necessary so that Pennsylvania can more accurately report the number of farms that are in compliance with federal mandates.

Key expected outcomes:

- Identification and assessment of methodologies that conservation districts can use to accurately estimate compliance with erosion and sedimentation and manure management planning requirements at the local level.
- Development of a user friendly handbook that conservation districts can use to select and implement statistically valid reliable estimates of compliance.

Implementation of Electronic Health Records in Rural Pennsylvania

Federal mandates require that, by 2016, local physicians implement electronic health records (EHRs) or face Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement penalties. The federal government has funded regional extension centers in every state to help local physicians transition to EHRs. Studies have suggested that implementation of EHRs remains a significant challenge in some rural parts of the country. This study will determine the current level of

implementation and identify barriers that may hinder implementation of EHRs in rural Pennsylvania by the 2016 deadline.

Key expected outcomes:

- Determination and analysis of the current status of rural physician offices in the assessment, adoption and implementation of EHRs.
- Comparison of assessment, adoption and implementation levels by geographic regions of the state.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

Telehealth in Rural Pennsylvania

Telehealth has been described as a very important way to equalize the differential in healthcare availability between rural and urban areas. It can offer the benefits of greater health care access, cost efficiencies and improved patient outcomes. This research will document telehealth use (including provider education, remote diagnosis, patient monitoring and education, and consultations) in rural Pennsylvania and identify barriers and opportunities for greater use.

Key expected outcomes:

- Estimation and description of telehealth services and practices used in rural Pennsylvania.
- Documentation of how telehealth use has impacted healthcare access, cost and outcomes in rural Pennsylvania.
- Identification of barriers to the optimal use and benefit of telehealth services in rural Pennsylvania.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

Rural Prisoner Reentry Challenges

Many factors, including employability, recovery from substance abuse, and criminal history can influence successful community reintegration for released prisoners. This research will examine the issues of successful prisoner reentry to rural communities. It will identify what services are needed for reentry, determine the extent to which services are available in rural communities, and identify risk or protective factors for successful reintegration.

Key expected outcomes:

- Estimation of the number and analysis of the characteristics of prisoners likely to be released into rural communities in Pennsylvania over the next five years.
- Review of risk or protective factors affecting successful prisoner reintegration in rural Pennsylvania.
- Identification and analysis of reentry services available to released prisoners in rural Pennsylvania.
- Gap analysis of reentry services available in rural Pennsylvania for successful reentry.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

Characteristics of Pennsylvania Students Pursuing Postsecondary Education

Students applying for postsecondary financial aid must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form. Data from this form provide a rich source of information about the socio-demographic characteristics and financial status of Pennsylvania students and their families. This research will analyze the most recent FAFSA data from rural and urban perspectives to better understand the characteristics and financial needs of students in postsecondary education in Pennsylvania.

Key expected outcomes:

- Analysis of the socio-demographic and financial characteristics of Pennsylvania's postsecondary-bound students.
- Assessment of educational financial needs of postsecondary students in Pennsylvania
- Rural/urban comparison of the characteristics and financial needs of Pennsylvania students.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

Examination of Postsecondary Educational Debt

The cost of postsecondary education can leave students with considerable debt. According to the Project on Student Debt, in Pennsylvania, 72 percent of 2009 graduates of a four-year institution had educational debt and the average debt was \$27,000. This figure, which is \$3000 above the national average, does not include those who have not completed their studies or who have attended proprietary or other non-four-year, degree-granting, postsecond-

ary schools. This research will examine issues surrounding educational debt among rural and urban students in Pennsylvania.

Key expected outcomes:

- Estimation of rural and urban student educational debt by type of institution (private, public, proprietary, etc.), completion rates, default rates, and level of debt.
- Determination of any relationship between student educational debt levels and type of institution, completion rates, and default rates.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

Assessment of Rural Secondary School Career Guidance Services

In 2011, more than 34,000 Pennsylvania rural students will graduate from high school. Historically, 72 percent of high school graduates indicate their intention to pursue postsecondary education. While parents remain the major influence on a student's post-high-school education and career pursuits, school guidance services are a critical source of career information and options. This research will examine the level and types of school career guidance services provided to youth in rural schools.

Key expected outcomes:

- Catalog and description of services provided by secondary school guidance counselors for 7th through 12th grade students.
- Comparison of guidance counseling services and resources (financial, staff, etc.) among districts.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

A Study of Guardianship Services in Pennsylvania

Many Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) act as guardians for individuals who are determined by the courts to be incompetent. This research will analyze the court appointed guardian process in Pennsylvania to determine the number of AAA guardianships in Pennsylvania and how the guardianship process works in different areas of the state as well as whether older adults have varying access to protection and guardianship as a result of living in a rural versus urban area.

Key expected outcomes:

- Estimation of the number of AAA guardianships in Pennsylvania.
- Assessment of how the guardianship process is implemented in rural and urban counties.
- Analysis of the level and quality of guardian services provided in rural and urban counties in Pennsylvania.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

Home and Community-Based Care Alternatives to Nursing Homes in Rural Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania's Office of Long-Term Living was created, in part, to rebalance long-term care in the state. Since its inception four years ago, it has helped to significantly increase in-home and community-based alternatives so that people can avoid going to a nursing facility. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Aging, studies repeatedly show that the vast majority of people want to receive long-term care at home rather than in a nursing facility. This research will document the availability of in-home and community-based services in rural and urban areas and identify any gaps that might exist and potential solutions.

Key expected outcomes:

- Analysis of current and future demand for long-term care services in Pennsylvania.
- Inventory of in-home and community-based services available to rural residents in Pennsylvania.
- Analysis of gaps in meeting current and projected long-term care service needs in rural communities.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

Population Projections for Pennsylvania for the Next 30 Years

The 2010 Census shows dynamic changes in Pennsylvania's population over the past 10 years and these changes will likely continue for the next 30 years, especially with continued development of the Marcellus Shale. Projecting Pennsylvania's population over the next 30 years by identifying where any changes will occur and the rates of

change will inform public policy decisions. This research will develop and analyze population projections at five-year intervals for Pennsylvania's 67 counties for the next 30 years.

Key expected outcomes:

- Development of Pennsylvania county level population projections to 2040 including age and gender cohorts.
- Description of the methods used to develop the projections.
- Analysis of the projected change in population from 2010 to 2040.

MULTIYEAR PROJECT

Study of Marcellus Shale Development Impacts

Development of the Marcellus Shale is bringing about considerable change in rural communities across much of Pennsylvania. With studies suggesting a decades-long presence, this developing industry has the potential for significant economic and social impact for the commonwealth and its 3.4 million rural residents in particular. To document the impact of Marcellus Shale development, this research will entail a multiple-year case study of four rural counties.

The Center seeks research involving an interdisciplinary team approach using quantitative and qualitative measures to document Marcellus Shale development impact. The research will involve two case study areas: the southwestern counties of Washington and Greene and the north central counties of Bradford and Lycoming.

Applicants whose Letters of Intent are accepted will submit one proposal that addresses both case study areas.

Applicants may identify the same project director for both case study areas or two different directors. Applicants may also use the same interdisciplinary team for both case study areas or identify separate teams for each area. The same methodology and work plan must be used for both case study areas. All focus areas listed below must be examined in each case study area. The Center strongly encourages and seeks collaborative applications within and among eligible institutions.

This research will be a multiple-year project involving three waves of data collection and analysis. The first wave of the study will begin 2012, the second wave in 2014 and the third in 2016. The proposals submitted in 2012 will be for the first wave and will provide a baseline for subsequent analyses. Proposals for waves two and three will be required under the 2014 and 2016 RFP and subsequent funding is contingent on work performance.

A separate grant, up to a maximum of \$50,000, will be awarded for each case study area.

Marcellus Shale case study focus areas will be:

Economic development

- Wealth, revenue and job creation, business startups and expansion
- Agriculture, forestry and wood products, and other existing industries
- Education and workforce development

Community services

- Health care
- Human services
- Public safety/emergency services
- Education

Infrastructure

- Housing
- Roads and bridges
- Telecommunication
- Water and sewage

Applicants submitting a Letter of Intent for this multiyear project may use a maximum of five typewritten pages, in addition to the Letter of Intent cover sheet. The additional pages are to allow for more details on the interdisciplinary team approach and the team members.

OPEN TOPICS FOR THE 2012 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 RESEARCH TOPICS

Mini Grant: Analysis of Survey of Financial Condition Data

As part of Act 47, the Municipalities Financial Recovery Act, all municipalities are required to submit the Survey of Financial Condition each year to the Governor's Center for Local Government Services (GCLGS). Using GCLGS's early warning system for financial distress, this research will identify and compare the number, type, and characteristics of rural and urban municipalities that are experiencing some level of financial distress.

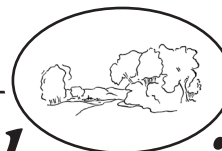
Key expected outcomes:

- Analysis of the results of the Survey of Financial Condition over the past three years from a rural/urban perspective.
- Analysis and comparison of the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of rural and urban municipalities that are experiencing some level of financial distress.

OPEN TOPICS FOR THE 2012 MINI GRANT PROGRAM

Open topic projects will also be accepted for the Mini Grant Program. Proposed Mini Grant topics 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 projects for open Mini Grants 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.



Rural Pennsylvania

A Legislative Agency of the Pennsylvania General Assembly

2012 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:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rural People and Communities | <input type="checkbox"/> Local Government Finance and Administration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Resources and Environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Outreach |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rural Values and Social Change | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Health and Welfare Concerns |

Synopsis of Project: _____

(50 word maximum) _____

2012 Estimated Budget:

| | |
|-------|---------------------------------------|
| _____ | Center for Rural Pennsylvania Funding |
| _____ | Other (Cash/In-kind) |
| _____ | 2012 Budget Total |

Project Duration: Nine Months (Mini Grant) One Year Two Years Three Years

Identified Partners or Subcontractors: _____

Project Director Signature: _____

Date: _____



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