

2020 RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS



THE CENTER FOR RURAL PENNSYLVANIA

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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.

THE CENTER FOR RURAL PENNSYLVANIA 2020 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 2020 grant cycle, the maximum allowable grant award is \$50,000 per project.

Targeted Topics

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

Open Topics

Open topics will also be accepted for Mini Grants.

Grant Application Process

The Center's 2020 Research Grant Program application process is as follows:

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. Request for Proposals is released. | March 2019 |
| 2. Deadline for submission of Letters of Intent. | April 22, 2019 |
| 3. Letters of Intent are reviewed and selected applicants are invited to submit a full proposal. | June 2019 |
| 4. Proposal planning discussions are conducted with applicants. | July-August 2019 |
| 5. Deadline for full proposal submissions. | August 26, 2019 |
| 6. Center's Board of Directors selects projects for funding. | December 2019 |
| 7. Final work plans are negotiated and accepted. | December 2019 |
| 8. Cooperative Agreements are issued and work begins. | January 2020 |

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 (page 14) 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, by mail, or via email or fax, by the close of business (4:30 p.m.) on Monday, April 22, 2019.

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 Monday, April 22, 2019.

TARGETED RESEARCH GRANT TOPICS FOR THE 2020 GRANT PROGRAM

Coroner/Medical Examiner Services in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania's opioid crisis and the deaths resulting from overdose have strained the staff and budgets of county coroners and medical examiners. This research will examine their resources including funding, facilities, forensic capacity, vehicles and equipment, and staffing and training to assess the adequacy and needs of coroners and medical examiners in Pennsylvania.

Key Expected Outcomes:

- Inventory of the office of county coroner/medical examiner in rural and urban Pennsylvania including: funding, facilities, forensic capacity, vehicles and equipment, staffing and training resources and other relevant factors, and analysis of changes in these factors over the past 5 years.
- Analysis of coroner/medical examiner caseloads in rural and urban Pennsylvania over the past 5 years.
- Analysis of the capacity of rural and urban coroners/medical examiners to meet current caseloads.
- Analysis of state funding sources dedicated to supporting coroners/medical examiners in Pennsylvania.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

Examination of the Substance Abuse Treatment Workforce in Rural Pennsylvania

At several of the Center's public hearings on the opioid crisis, issues of recruitment and retention for professional substance abuse treatment staff were raised, particularly in rural counties. This research will examine the current status and pipeline for those professionals working in rural Pennsylvania.

Key Expected Outcomes:

- Profile of the current professional substance abuse treatment workforce by county in rural Pennsylvania including occupation, education and certification, training, demographics, and other characteristics.
- Determination of the current demand for and supply of substance abuse treatment workers in rural Pennsylvania and analysis of any gaps between demand and supply.
- Identification of barriers for the recruitment and retention of skilled substance abuse treatment personnel in rural Pennsylvania.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

Small Town Police Chiefs

The Center for Rural Pennsylvania conducted a 2005 survey of municipal police chiefs to better understand the issues facing “small-town” (municipalities with population <10,000) police departments. Using survey methodology, this research will revisit and examine those issues to identify current rural and urban differences in budgeting, staffing, and equipment, as well as attitudes on regionalization, and responses to the opioid crisis.

Key Expected Outcomes:

- Profile of the demographic characteristics of municipal police chiefs, their police departments (staffing, facilities, funding, etc.), and characteristics of the municipalities they serve.
- Comparison of the current profile with the 2005 survey results.
- Analysis of current issues facing small town police departments including resource levels, regionalization, contract policing, use of the Pennsylvania State Police, issues surrounding opioids and other drugs, and other relevant topics.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

Analysis of Municipal Land Use Planning Tools in Rural and Urban Pennsylvania

In 2001, the Center published research that examined if and how rural and urban municipalities were using municipal land use planning tools. Since 2001 many municipalities have adopted land use planning tools but little is known about their impact. This research will revisit the issue of land use planning (comprehensive plans, zoning, and alternative land use measures) to determine current use, compliance, and effectiveness.

Key Expected Outcomes:

- Assessment of municipalities with comprehensive plans to determine: when the plans were developed; scope of the plans; when the plans were updated; and compliance and effectiveness.
- Assessment of municipalities with zoning to determine the processes used to ensure compliance with zoning, and the effectiveness of zoning in managing growth and development.
- Assessment of the number and type of alternative land use measures (agricultural zoning, joint planning, transfer of development rights, etc.) being used by municipalities, and an assessment of their effectiveness.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

Access to Mental Health Care in Rural Pennsylvania

The National Alliance on Mental Illness estimates that almost 19 percent of adults in the U.S. experience mental illness in a given year, and that about 21 percent of youth ages 13-18 have experienced a severe mental disorder. In rural areas, accessing mental health services can be challenging due to the lack of providers, stigma, transportation, and other factors. This research will analyze access to mental health care for Pennsylvania's rural residents with a special focus on youth and the elderly.

Key Expected Outcomes:

- Estimation of the demand for and supply of mental health services in rural Pennsylvania with a particular focus on youth (under 18) and the elderly (65+).
- Identification of the challenges rural Pennsylvanians face in accessing mental health care for underserved populations including youth (under 18) and the elderly (65+).
- Identification of options for improving and expanding mental health care services for rural Pennsylvanians to include telehealth, state hospital staff and facilities, and other possible options.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

An Aging Population: Participants in Today's Rural Economy

In rural Pennsylvania, one in five residents is 65+, and these older adults are becoming a growing segment of the rural economy as consumers and workforce participants. Older adults may have interest in rejoining or staying in the workforce and also have needs and interests that may translate into business opportunities. This research will examine business opportunities that serve and employ older adults in rural communities.

Key Expected Outcomes:

- Inventory and analysis of strategies, programs, and policies both inside and outside of the U.S. that target rural adults as consumers and producers in the local economy.
- Assessment of the applicability and feasibility of those strategies, programs, and policies for implementation in rural Pennsylvania.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

Access to Maternity and Obstetric Services in Rural Pennsylvania

As mergers and acquisitions among hospital and health care systems continue in Pennsylvania, access to maternity and obstetric services may be affected for rural residents. This research will examine access to prenatal care, labor and delivery services, and post-delivery care for mothers and infants in rural Pennsylvania.

Key Expected Outcomes:

- Estimation of the supply of and the demand for maternity and obstetric services in rural Pennsylvania.
- Analysis of gaps between the supply of and demand for maternity and obstetric services.
- Identification of barriers and alternative options to providing maternity and obstetric services to rural Pennsylvanians.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

Rural Youth Survey

In 2010, the Center published the final installment of a survey of rural youth that identified attitudes toward education, their communities, future careers, and other issues. Through a survey of rural high school students, this research will gather information on these issues today and compare findings with the prior research.

Key Expected Outcomes:

- Survey of a representative sample of rural Pennsylvania public high school students to identify attitudes about their community, future careers, and where they hope to live as adults.
- Identification of the forces (family, peers, demographic factors, etc.) that influence the aspirations of rural youth.
- Comparison of survey results with the 2010 rural youth survey to identify patterns and changes in youth attitudes.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

Case Study of Arts-Based Economic Development in Rural Communities

Rural communities are looking for ways to attract and retain residents, with some incorporating arts-initiated development approaches to boost their economy and enhance livability. This research will include case studies of communities in rural Pennsylvania that have included the arts in their comprehensive planning and successfully used creative industries for revitalization.

Key Expected Outcomes:

- Case studies of rural communities that have been successful in leveraging the arts and creative industries to advance economic development in rural Pennsylvania.
- Identification of challenges that rural communities attempting to implement arts-based economic development have encountered.
- Identification of public and private funding sources and community partnerships that can be used to plan, implement, and sustain arts-based economic development.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

Assessment of Food Animal Veterinary Medicine Services in Pennsylvania

Access to veterinary care is important for Pennsylvania's livestock and poultry industries. Food animal veterinarians ensure the health of food animals and are often the first line of defense against diseases that can spread from humans to animals. This research will inventory food animal veterinarians in Pennsylvania and determine ways to ensure that an adequate number of food animal veterinarians are available in Pennsylvania.

Key Expected Outcomes:

- Profile of food animal veterinarians in Pennsylvania including: demographic characteristics, years of practice, counties of practice, type of practice (animal hospital, partnership, solo, industry site, etc.), weekly hours spent in animal care, etc.
- Assessment of food animal veterinarian job satisfaction, intentions to remain in practice, and challenges (financial, social, physical, etc.).
- Examination of recruitment and retention efforts for food animal veterinarians in Pennsylvania.
- Examination of programs that other states have used for the recruitment and retention of food animal veterinarians.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

OPEN TOPICS FOR THE 2020 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.

TARGETED MINI GRANT TOPICS FOR THE 2020 GRANT PROGRAM

Analysis of the 2017 Census of Agriculture Data

The 2017 Census of Agriculture will be released in early 2019. This research will use the 2017 Census of Agriculture to provide a comprehensive analysis of farmers, farm operations, and existing trends and conditions in the state's agriculture industry. It will also compare current data with those from the 2012, and 2007 Censuses of Agriculture to identify how Pennsylvania's agriculture industry is evolving.

Key Expected Outcomes:

- Development of a series of profiles highlighting farmers and farm operations by characteristics such as operator demographics, type of operation, farming practices, profitability, farm labor, and other relevant factors.
- Analysis of profiled farm and farm operations to determine how farm, farmer and farming characteristics have changed statewide and regionally within Pennsylvania using data from the 2007, 2012, and 2017 Censuses of Agriculture.

Population Decline: A How-To Guide for Community Leaders

Many municipalities in Pennsylvania have experienced long-term population decline. While reversing this trend will be difficult, there are strategies and programs that can assist communities in maintaining and improving the quality of life for residents. This research will identify such efforts and prepare a user-friendly handbook for community leaders to assist them in addressing population decline.

Key Expected Outcomes:

- Identification of initiatives and strategies (pertaining to such issues as transportation, housing, recreation, etc.) in Pennsylvania and other states designed to maintain quality of life in communities.
- Assessment of the applicability of identified strategies to Pennsylvania rural communities that are experiencing long-term population decline.
- Selected case studies of communities that have implemented such strategies to maintain community vitality despite long-term population decline.
- Development of a user-friendly handbook for communities facing population decline.

Profile of Rural Women

Rural women are engaged in helping their communities achieve economic, environmental and social change. In Pennsylvania, there has been limited analysis about the demographic and economic status of rural women. Using multiple secondary data sources, this research will analyze Pennsylvania's rural women (18-34, 35-64, 65+) on measures of educational achievement, health care access, economic status, and other relevant demographic and socioeconomic indicators.

Key Expected Outcomes:

- Develop a current profile of rural women to include demographic, economic, health, and other relevant indicators.
- Analysis of how this profile has changed over the last 10 years.
- Comparisons of this profile with a profile of rural men and urban women.

Analysis of the Legal Issues Surrounding Cemeteries, Burial Places and Human Remains in Pennsylvania

In recent years, a number of cemeteries and burial places in Pennsylvania have been impacted by construction projects, and human remains have been unearthed. This has led to questions about Pennsylvania's legal system for handling human remains, and the roles and responsibilities of state and local agencies. This research will examine the state's current legal framework for burial places, and the treatment of human remains, and identify important issues and trends affecting care and stewardship.

Key Expected Outcomes:

- Summary of the current legal framework for cemeteries and burial places and the treatment of human remains, including identification of the roles and responsibilities of state and local agencies.
- Comparison of Pennsylvania's legal framework for the treatment of human remains with other states.
- Identification of key issues affecting the stewardship and care of cemeteries and burial places, and the treatment of human remains in Pennsylvania.

Assessment of Pennsylvania's Student Assistance Program

Pennsylvania's Student Assistance Program (SAP) is required under Pennsylvania's school code and is designed to assist school personnel in identifying issues, including mental health and the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, that may be barriers to a student's success. This research will determine the status of Pennsylvania public schools' implementation of the state Student Assistance Program statutory mandate.

Key Expected Outcomes:

- Analysis of the implementation of Pennsylvania's Student Assistance Program statutory mandate in Pennsylvania urban and rural public schools.
- Identification of the challenges and opportunities that schools face in implementing their Student Assistance Program.
- Identification of resources and partnerships that schools can use to implement a Student Assistance Program.

Sustainability of Pennsylvania's Wildlife Conservation System

Current methods to fund wildlife conservation and management in Pennsylvania may not be sustainable. Funds to support wildlife agency budgets are generated through license sales, yet Pennsylvania is experiencing a continuing decline among those who participate in hunting and fishing. Other states have instituted new models for wildlife conservation funding. This research will identify funding mechanisms, and any other strategies other states use to fund wildlife conservation and management.

Key Expected Outcomes:

- Identification of funding mechanisms, models and strategies that other states have used to generate wildlife conservation funding.
- Analysis of the feasibility of the identified strategies for implementation in Pennsylvania to support wildlife conservation.

Analysis of Public School Transportation

In 2016-17, Pennsylvania rural and urban school districts spent considerable sums on school transportation: \$400 million for rural districts and \$1 billion for urban districts. This research will examine school transportation data, including ridership, ownership, finances, safety, and other issues, and will identify trends and challenges concerning school transportation in rural and urban Pennsylvania.

Key Expected Outcomes:

- Analysis of Pennsylvania rural and urban public school district transportation services and their changes over the past 5 years. This analysis will include ridership, ownership, finances, safety, and other relevant issues.
- Comparison of rural and urban public school transportation services.
- Comparison of rural and urban transportation services based on school district geographic size, enrollment, and financial resources.

Analysis of Suicide Trends and Prevention Programs

Rural Pennsylvania has a higher suicide rate than urban Pennsylvania. This research will analyze the demographics of suicide victims over the last 10 years. It will also inventory suicide prevention and counseling programs and services to assess availability for rural and urban residents.

Key Expected Outcomes:

- Analysis of rural and urban suicide data to identify rates, patterns, and trends over the past 10 years.
- Inventory of suicide prevention and counseling programs and services in rural and urban counties and school districts in Pennsylvania. This inventory will include funding, staffing, and clients served, and other relevant data.

OPEN TOPICS FOR THE 2020 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.

OPEN CALL

Measuring the Effectiveness of Pennsylvania's Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) Programs and Services

As treatment efforts expand to address the opioid crisis affecting our nation and state, federal and state funding to support MAT have increased substantially. The Center is interested in Pennsylvania-based applied policy research focused on measuring the effectiveness of MAT programs and services in Pennsylvania.

We will accept submissions for both full grants (\$50,000 max and 1-year timeframe) and mini-grants (\$15,000 max and 9-month timeframe).

Note: The Center does not fund operational projects, but rather applied policy research or data analysis.

2020 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) _____

2020 Estimated Budget:

_____	Center for Rural Pennsylvania Funding
_____	Other (Cash/In-kind)
_____	2020 Budget Total

Project Duration: Nine Months (Mini Grant) One Year

Identified Partners or Subcontractors: _____

Project Director Signature: _____

Date: _____



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