



United States Department of Agriculture

# **RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

## **Growing Stronger in the Delta**

June, 2013

# How do Foundations Fit into Economic & Community Development and where does Rural Development fit?

- Big Picture – for Both
  - Financial Assistance
  - Conveners of the Region
  - Leadership Development
  - Partnership Development
- Can't keep driving into the future looking in the rear view mirror
  - Has been a reliance on federal, state and local government resources
    - These resources especially in the form of grants are declining



# Foundations/Rural Development Partnership

- Many communities and their organizations look outside their community for funding
  - This is a ‘kiss of death’ to approach national/regional/state funders without first developing local support
  - Even in the highest poverty areas, there is wealth
- USDA, Rural Development has typically been known as a financial provider in the past funding “projects”
- The last few years leadership has realized the importance of looking at investments from an economic/community development standpoint.
- Additionally, realizing that each community, especially small rural ones, cannot stand on their own so we are looking at regional opportunities as well.



## Foundations/Rural Development Partnership

- We have come to rely on strong partnerships with other funding institutions, partners, etc.
- The piece that has been missing in Missouri has been that strong partnership with foundations and the role that they can play in assisting with economic and community development in coordination with Rural Development.
- That is what led us to this place. I am excited to have the foundations at the table with Rural Development (we are basically the only agency helping rural communities) to look for ways to work together to help our Missouri communities.



# Foundations/Rural Development Partnership

- Yes, we helped fund the grant to do the TOW but that was just a small thing compared to what I hope we can do together down the road.
- Rural Development focus in Rural Area – philanthropy distributes a little less than 3% of annual payout to rural areas
  - We want to help increase these resources to the rural areas
  - We want to explore opportunities to leverage Rural Development funds with Community Foundations providing “gap” funding for community/regional projects
  - Exploring other funding opportunities with foundations to build their capacity to bolster their endowments
    - If we can help make this happen, we would hope to encourage increased funding to rural areas



# Foundations/Rural Development Partnership

- Missouri Community Foundations – Current Status
  - Not many
  - Not a state wide structure
  - 115 counties in state and there are a few not covered by existing community foundations
    - Many of the Delta Counties in Southeast Missouri are uncovered
- Future Plans
  - Now have state wide TOW to really start looking at opportunities
  - Have the community foundations working together for the good of the state
  - Really hoping this great state wide group can help with getting community foundations established in areas not covered
  - Hoping for a “formal” state wide organization
- Transfer of Wealth Study for the state is huge tool for USDA
  - Help see where the most need is
  - Identifies local resources that could assist
  - Has regional divisions to help us focus our resources



# Foundations/Rural Development Partnership

- Showed us there is wealth in the areas we thought were poor, i.e. the Delta Counties
- Would love to see the DRA and the 8 state Rural Development Offices take on endeavor to obtain a TOW for all of the Delta Counties/Region
- Doing the TOW study has strengthened the partnership between USDA and the community foundations and we are at the table together discussing opportunities



# Foundations/Rural Development Partnership

- USDA Role has varied in the past but still have some good accomplishments in partnership with foundations in the state
  - One foundation funded two regional partnership programs similar to the SET program (called Strengthening our Communities to differentiate them from SET) with the same partners providing the training and guidance.
  - Working with one foundation on a “Rural Schools Partnership” to see where RD can leverage funds with the foundation to assist rural schools
  - Missouri Foundation for Health is a Food Systems workgroup, leveraging RD funds in support of Healthy and Active Community programs. The foundation sponsored a webinar where USDA provided an overview of funding that could complement their funding for healthy and active community applicants





# Foundations/Rural Development Partnership

- USDA Role has varied in the past but still have some good accomplishments in partnership with foundations in the state (Cont)
  - USDA provided funding to one foundation for infrastructure for the EmPowerU Lab providing innovative, experimental decision-making training for over 15,000 are youth and adults
    - We are now assisting this foundation to set up a satellite office in a small rural community and expanding their programs and assistance
    - Potential funding in support of “mobile learning labs” to take these programs to more rural schools that cannot afford to transport the students to the main facility
  - Exploring a regional food hub project in partnership with one foundation
  - AND OF COURSE, THE STATE WIDE TRANSFER OF WEALTH STUDY AND STATE WIDE FOUNDATION ORGANIZATION!!!!1



# Foundations/Rural Development Partnership

- Bottom Line
  - Need foundations at the table more now than ever before
  - Critical even in the poorest areas
  - Only way we are going to move from “project based” assistance to “place based” assistance with a strong emphasis on regional
  - With USDA Rural Development out in the rural areas and working face to face with communities, I believe we can be a catalyst in partnership with the philanthropy contingent to help make a difference in the area of economic and community development
  - With reduction of federal, state and local resources, we have to make sure “the juice is worth the squeeze”
  - As we go forward in this new, exciting partnership, I would offer some lessons I have learned that I use in every endeavor, both professionally and personally

# Lessons Learned from Noah's Ark

Don't miss the boat;

Remember that we are all in the  
same boat;

Plan Ahead, it wasn't raining  
when Noah built the Ark;

Stay Fit;

Don't listen to critics, just get on  
with the job that needs to  
be done;

Build your future on high ground;

For safety, travel in pairs

Speed isn't always an advantage;

When you're stressed, float a  
while;

Remember the Ark was built by  
amateurs; the Titanic by  
professionals!

The Woodpecker might have to  
go!!!!





# Foundations/Rural Development Partnership

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