



Items of Interest

Understanding Heirs' Property at the Community Level

Through funding from USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and in partnership with colleagues working with the Southern Rural Development Center on heirs' property, the team finalized the curriculum "Understanding Heirs' Property at the Community Level" last spring. During this past November, SRDC was joined by the Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Policy Research Center at Alcorn State University and the Southern Risk Management Extension Center to pilot a train-the-trainer workshop for Extension professionals. Two more trainings are scheduled for February and March of this year. To keep up with future training opportunities, you can visit the [Heirs' Property landing page](#). To be added to the Heirs' Property listserv and learn more about this topic, please email Rachel Welborn at rachel.welborn@msstate.edu.

The 1890 Universities Foundation: Advocates for the 19-Strong 1890 Universities



"The 1890 Foundation applauds the work of the Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC) in celebration of the center's 50 years of strengthening capacity for the region's land-grant universities. The 1890 Universities Foundation shares SRDC's goal of supporting strategic partnerships and mobilizing resources to address critical issues facing communities in the rural south.

Since the 1890 University Foundation's inception six years ago, we have promoted the **19-Strong** brand to represent the 19 member universities in the 1890 Land-Grant community. Collectively, the **19-Strong** 1890 Universities have earned the distinction throughout our 133-year history dating back to the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1890, as the historically black land-grant institutions of higher education committed to the advancement of research, extension, and teaching to enhance the quality of life in the communities we serve. We stand ready to join our 1890 colleagues to continue collaborating with the SRDC and other stakeholders on rural development issues and opportunities that support vibrant communities."



Dr. Mort Neufville, President & CEO of the 1890 Universities Foundation

For more information visit [HOME|1890 \(1890foundation.org\)](http://HOME|1890(1890foundation.org))

Webinars:

Investing in Rural Recovery: Key Findings from the Southern Region

Tuesday, February 28
11:00 AM CST / 12:00 PM EST

[REGISTRATION LINK](#)

Final Listening Sessions Report: Investing in Rural Capacity

The four Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDCs) conducted a rapid assessment of priorities for investments in rural community development. The overarching purpose was to identify the critical resources needed to build community capacity and improve quality of life in rural America. Conducted via an iterative process from Fall 2021 to Spring 2022, the assessment is from the perspective of stakeholders working in the rural development spaces.

This process was divided into two phases:

- **Phase I:** In Fall 2021, an online survey was distributed to stakeholders, which focused on eight topical areas that often impact rural recovery. Survey findings informed the development of the second phase.
- **Phase II:** In Spring 2022, eight virtual listening sessions focused on identifying what is needed to fill the gaps between rural communities' assets and opportunities. These facilitated dialogues, which included interactive technologies, asked participants to think about Extension/education, research, and other investments that were needed, and to prioritize them by the most pressing areas for intervention.

In summary, the combination of findings from the survey and listening sessions underscore stakeholder priorities as those efforts that will advance organizational capacity, as well as funding and development opportunities, especially through research and Extension efforts. While these issues have been explored through the Rapid Assessment of Stakeholder Priorities conducted by the RRDCs throughout 2021-2022, additional work is needed to build upon this work and to activate positive impacts in the field of rural development.

Read the full report via the [Rural Regional Development Center website](#).

The graphic is a vertical rectangular poster. At the top left, it says 'WEBINAR' in white on a dark blue background. To the right are the logos for RRDC (Rural Regional Development Center) and SRDC (Southern Rural Development Center). The main title 'Investing in Rural Recovery: KEY FINDINGS FROM THE SOUTHERN REGION' is in white on a blue background. Below the title is a collage of photos showing diverse rural people. A calendar icon indicates the date 'Tuesday, February 28' and time '11:00 AM - 12:00 PM CST'. At the bottom right, there is an orange button that says 'REGISTER VIA ZOOM LINK'.

WEBINAR: Investing in Rural Recovery: Key Findings from the Southern Region

Please join the Southern Rural Development Center for a webinar on Tuesday, February 28, 11:00 AM-12:00 PM CST / 12:00-1:00 EST.

The purpose of this webinar is to share findings from the Southern Region survey and listening sessions conducted in 2022 around the topic "Investing in Rural Recovery."

[REGISTER FOR THE WEBINAR](#)

USDA to Create Plan to Expand Recreation Economies and Help People thrive Across Rural America

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that it will create a plan to expand recreation economies to help people thrive across rural America. Through a [Memorandum of Understanding](#), [USDA Rural Development](#), the [National Institute of Food and Agriculture \(NIFA\)](#) and the [U.S. Forest Service](#) will partner to develop an annual plan to expand economic opportunities related to recreation in communities surrounding America's national forests.

The annual plan will outline the ways the agencies will partner to conduct program outreach, host informational sessions and workshops, and develop toolkits to help people access the resources they need to thrive in recreation economies.

To learn more, read the full [Stakeholder Announcement](#).

Regional Spotlight

4-H Tech Changemakers Program to Facilitate Greater Digital Access

[The University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture](#) recently received a grant to implement [4-H Tech Changemakers](#), a unique program that enables teen leaders to learn and train on topics focused on digital literacy, broadband access, and evidence-based programming to enhance their communities and bridge STEM (science, technology, education, and math) gaps, no matter their socioeconomic status and demographic. In turn, the teen leaders will share their knowledge with peers and adults within their neighborhoods. The grant will assist Tennessee communities that need it most.

Approximately 37% of Tennesseans do not have home access to high-speed, broadband internet and many cannot afford broadband subscription services or the necessary access devices. A lack of digital readiness and literacy poses lifelong consequences for Tennesseans across educational attainment, race, age, and socioeconomic status. The COVID-19 pandemic magnified this reality, increasing the digital divide between those who have internet and those who do not. The absence of digital literacy can lead to missed opportunities for students choosing a field of study or for job-seeking adults. Opportunities in the STEM field continue to experience growth, but statistics indicate there is a deficit in pursuing these areas of study and employment among underrepresented students.

The program is also designed to actively recruit underrepresented adult participants, providing them with a STEM-forward curriculum that bolsters greater digital literacy. The goal is to develop a curriculum focused around digital literacy skills to reach and educate 5,000 adults, with an emphasis on preparing them for the workforce and giving them the skills to achieve greater economic opportunities. The Tennessee 4-H program currently offers STEM programming across the state. The 4-H Tech Changemakers program will use the existing STEM programming platform and leverage the statewide presence of 4-H in all 95 counties to enable broad access to tools and content.

The new program will provide students with enhanced opportunities to engage in STEM education with nontraditional methods, dismantling system barriers to provide a more impactful educational experience. With the enhancement of virtual platforms, students will have opportunities to participate in virtual STEM clubs and other opportunities through UT's Tickle College of Engineering. Collaboration with departments and colleges within the University of Tennessee system will be a key component to implementing the program.

Daniel Collins is the program lead and state Extension specialist with Tennessee 4-H Youth Development. In addition to Collins, project members include Sreedhar Upendram with the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Justin Crowe and Jamie Harris with Tennessee 4-H Youth Development. The one-year grant is funded by the National 4-H Council, along with support from Microsoft, Tractor Supply Company, and Verizon.

Grant Connections

STAKEHOLDER ANNOUNCEMENT: USDA Accepting Applications to Spur Job Growth and Economic Development in Rural Areas

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development (RD) is accepting applications for funding to help create jobs and economic growth in rural communities. USDA is making loans and grants available under the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) program. Through this program, USDA provides zero-interest loans and grants to current and former Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Electric Program and Telecommunications Program borrowers and utilities that are eligible to receive assistance from the RUS Electric or Telecommunication Programs.

Applicants will use the funds to help local businesses finance projects that will create and retain jobs or finance community facility projects. Projects must be in rural areas or towns with a population of 50,000 or less.

Applications must be submitted to the USDA Rural Development State Office where the project is located no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on the following dates: Third Quarter: March 31, 2023; Fourth Quarter: June 30, 2023.

Interested applicants are encouraged to contact their local USDA Rural Development State Office well in advance of the application deadline to ask questions about their project, the program, or the application process. Additional information is available on page 53443 of the [Aug 31, 2022, Federal Register](#). If you'd like to subscribe to USDA Rural Development updates, visit our [GovDelivery subscriber page](#).

Job Opportunities

Assistant Administrator, Community Development and Outreach, Fort Valley State University

Open until filled

The assistant Administrator for Community Development and Outreach will develop, coordinate, and facilitate programming through the Cooperative Extension Program designed to assist communities to realize their long-term goals; through provision of education, technical assistance and opportunities to secure grants that support strategic planning and community visioning to provide a foundation for economic development. Coordinate or assist in the coordination of programs through outreach efforts with USDA Agencies, State, private and public and nonprofit entities. Master's degree in Agricultural Economics, economics, business administration or other business disciplines is required. Preference will be given to applicants with extension and strong community development experiences. Applicants with degrees in closely related disciplines with community development experiences may also apply.

[LEARN MORE AND APPLY](#)

Assistant Professor, Nutrition and Food Safety, Family & Consumer Sciences Department, University of Tennessee

Open until filled

The University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, Extension Family & Consumer Sciences Department is looking to fill the position of Assistant Professor, Nutrition. The position will work to develop and teach effective, research-based nutrition programs across the state, which enhance the lives of Tennesseans. will work collaboratively with cross-

functional teams within and outside of the FCS department and the university to contribute to the mission of the FCS department, UT Extension, and the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture (UTIA).

[LEARN MORE AND APPLY](#)

Associate Professor, Community Health, Family & Consumer Sciences Department, University of Tennessee

The position of Associate Professor in Community Health, Family & Consumer Sciences Department is responsible for planning, developing, and implementing research-based adult and you Extension programs in nutrition to promote safe food handling practices, healthy dietary habits, and to improve health and nutritional status among Tennesseans, including, but not limited to, Extension programs for diet-related disease prevention and management, food safety, and food preservation.

[LEARN MORE AND APPLY](#)

Non-Tenure Track Assistant Research Professor, Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development

Open until filled

The NERCRD seeks applications for a one-year Non-Tenure Track Assistant Research Professor, with good chances of renewal, subject to funding. The Non-Tenure Track Assistant Research Professor will be responsible for conducting economic and statistical analyses on a wide range of rural development topics, as determined by the Center's emerging needs and priorities. There is a strong expectation that this research will contribute both to the science base as well as to informing U.S. rural economic development policy. Importantly, the opportunity exists to work with Penn State's Census Data Center. Examples of topics to be studied range from policy impact assessments (including the impact of farm subsidies, agritourism activities and extension education); to the interdependence of rural and urban areas, as well as agricultural and non-agricultural industries; to the determinants of local economic well-being and health.

Candidates should upload a letter of application, names, and addresses of three professional references, curriculum vitae, and official transcripts at the time of application. Questions can be directed to Stephan J. Goetz, Department of Agricultural Economics, Sociology, and Education, The Pennsylvania State University at sjg16@psu.edu. Screening of applications will begin March 8, 2023, and the position will remain open until filled.

[LEARN MORE AND APPLY](#)

Conferences, Workshops, Trainings

Joint Council of Extension Professionals (JCEP) Public Issues Leadership Development (PILD) Conference

In-person: April 16-19, 2023, Hyatt Regency Crystal City, Arlington, Virginia

The JCEP is hosting their 2023 PILD Conference. The conference is to enhance education and advocacy skills to positively affect federal, state, and local resources available for Cooperative Extension.

[LEARN MORE](#)

National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP) 2023 Conference

In-person Conference: April 30 – May 3, 2023, Coeur D'Alene, Idaho.

[LEARN MORE AND REGISTER](#)

The Rural Sociological Society (RSS) 2023 Conference

In-person: August 2-6, 2023, Burlington, Vermont

RSS President, John J. Green, SRDC Director

Theme: Pursuing Equity and Access in Development: Roles for Rural-Focused Public Scholars.

[LEARN MORE](#)

This material is based upon work supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.