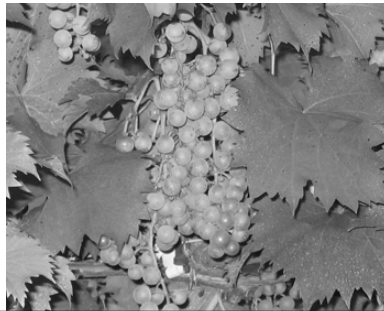


2011 RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM



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.

2011 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 the 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 2011 grant cycle, the maximum allowable grant award is \$50,000 per project.

Targeted Topics

This year the Board of Directors has approved 12 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. The Board has approved five targeted Mini Grant topics that are listed on Page 9. Open topics will also be accepted for Mini Grants.

Grant Application Process

The Center's 2011 Research Grant Program application process is as follows:

1. Request for Proposals released. March 2010
2. Deadline for submission of Letters of Intent. April 28, 2010
3. Letters of Intent are reviewed and acted upon by the Board of Directors.
Selected applicants are invited to submit a full proposal for formal review. June 2010
4. Proposal planning discussions are conducted with applicants. June – July 2010
5. Deadline for full proposal submission. August 26, 2010
6. Center's Board of Directors selects projects for funding. November 2010
7. Final work plans are negotiated and accepted. November – December 2010
8. Cooperative Agreements are issued and work begins. January 2011

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 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 back inside cover and available on the Center's website at www.rural.palegislature.us), and is limited to a maximum of three additional 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 Wednesday, April 28, 2010.

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 arrive at the office of the Center for Rural Pennsylvania by the close of business (4:30 p.m.) on Wednesday, April 28, 2010.

Proposals

An applicant whose Letter of Intent is approved by the Board will be asked to submit a detailed proposal for his/her project. Proposals are due at the Center by close of business on Thursday, August 26, 2010.

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 2010-2011 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 2011 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 Thursday, August 26, 2010. All proposals submitted become the property of the Center for Rural Pennsylvania.

Content

Applicants whose Letter of Intent is approved by the Board of Directors will receive complete guidelines on the 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 2011 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 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 Wednesday, April 28, 2010.

All proposals for the 2011 Research Grant Program must be received in the Center for Rural Pennsylvania office by the close of business (4:30 p.m.) on Thursday, August 26, 2010.

TARGETED TOPICS FOR THE 2011 GRANT PROGRAM

1. Rural Pennsylvania's Tourism Industry

State government has been an important investor in the development and promotion of Pennsylvania's tourism industry; recent economic conditions have resulted in considerably less direct state government investment. The hotel tax, enacted in 2000, has generated additional revenues to support tourism. This research will examine the tourism development and promotion infrastructure in rural Pennsylvania and make recommendations on ways to sustain the industry in these changing times.

Key Expected Outcomes

- Assessment of the current network for tourism development and promotion in rural Pennsylvania.
- Analysis of the impact of hotel tax revenues.
- Identification of regionally developed and financed strategies to develop and promote the tourism industry in rural Pennsylvania.
- Identification of innovative practices that other states and areas have used to improve and sustain tourism.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

2. Microfinancing: A Potential Partner in Pennsylvania's Economic Recovery?

Microfinancing has proven effective in enabling low-income people to start their own businesses, generate or sustain income and build wealth. It can provide financing, savings and essential financial services to those who are not bankable due to lack of collateral, steady employment, income or a verifiable credit history. This research will examine the role of microfinancing in the start-up and sustainability of small businesses in rural Pennsylvania.

Key Expected Outcomes

- List of government and non-government organizations currently providing microfinancing in Pennsylvania.
- Estimation of the demand for microfinancing in rural Pennsylvania.
- Identification of barriers and opportunities for increased participation by both lenders and borrowers.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

3. Pennsylvania's Wine Industry - An Assessment

Pennsylvania currently ranks 7th nationally in the production of wine. In 2008, Pennsylvania's 123 wineries produced nearly 1 million gallons of wine. This research will examine current wine industry capacity including workforce, access to capital, and marketing and sales, and identify strategies that can help to grow the industry further.

Key Expected Outcomes

- Assessment of industry needs.
- Determination of the current industry capacity and growth potential.
- Assessment of the industry's participation in state economic development funding and technical assistance programs.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

4. Implementation and Impact of Act 119 (Dog Law) in Pennsylvania

Act 119 resulted in dramatic changes in state regulations governing the operation of dog kennels in Pennsylvania. This research will examine how Act 119 has been implemented and its impact on Pennsylvania's commercial kennels.

Key Expected Outcomes

- Determination of the change in the number and status of kennels in Pennsylvania.
- Analysis of the impact of the Act on the commercial dog breeding industry at large.
- Analysis of enforcement practices and outcomes.
- Impact of kennel closures on community supported animal shelters.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

5. A State Meat Inspection Program: Time to Revisit?

After passage of the federal Wholesome Meat Act of 1968, Pennsylvania was one of the first states to discontinue its state meat processing inspection program in favor of relying totally on USDA for such services. 2007 Center for Rural Pennsylvania research that examined Pennsylvania's meat processing industry underlined potential benefits to producers, processors and consumers if state meat inspection were reimplemented as an option for those who wished to participate in more localized markets. This research will examine barriers and opportunities attendant to reestablishing a state meat inspection program in Pennsylvania.

Key Expected Outcomes

- Feasibility study that includes a cost/benefit analysis, measure of demand, issues of overregulation, etc.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

6. Pennsylvania Weights and Measures Program

The Consolidated Weights and Measures Act of 1996, which governs the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's (PDA) Bureau of Weights and Measures, removed the requirement for counties to maintain inspection programs. Today, only 16 counties and one city maintain their own programs. The Act also allowed for the privatization of inspections. This research will examine how these changes have affected Pennsylvania's weights and measures inspection efforts.

Key Expected Outcomes

- Determination of PDA's efforts to meet the mandates of the law.
- Examination of fee generation as an option to provide an income stream to support the department's efforts.
- Analysis of models used by other states to support weights and measures inspection.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

7. Pennsylvania State Police Services Provided in Pennsylvania

Seventy-one percent of rural municipalities and 10 percent of urban, rely on the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) for police coverage. The issue of PSP coverage to municipalities remains a matter of policy discussion,

particularly as it relates to the cost and who pays for it. This research will examine the provision of PSP coverage to municipalities and the cost of providing those services.

Key Expected Outcomes

- Analysis of the types of services provided to Pennsylvania municipalities as well as attendant costs, over the past five years.
- Examination of revenue generated through fines and the allocation of this revenue to the state and municipalities.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

8. Pennsylvania's Rural County Prison Systems

According to 2007 Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency data, four rural counties do not have county jails, and six rural counties housed inmates from other counties. This research will examine rural Pennsylvania's county prison systems to identify current and future operating capacities and needs.

Key Expected Outcomes

- Examination of rural county prison physical plants, inmate services and staffing patterns.
- Analysis of incarceration rates versus capacity, over the past 10 years.
- Review of prison financing for construction, renovation and maintenance.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

9. Examination of Rural County Veterans Affairs Offices

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there are approximately 336,000 veterans living in rural Pennsylvania, including veterans from pre-WW II to those returning from recent military deployment. County Veterans Affairs Offices can assist with compensation and pension claims, healthcare coverage applications (VA hospitals and CHAMP VA), funeral and burial claims, and the recording of county veterans' burial places. However, the need for and range of services provided vary greatly from county to county. This research will inventory and compare the services provided by County Veterans Affairs Offices in rural Pennsylvania.

Key Expected Outcomes

- Analysis of the operating budgets and staffing patterns of County Veterans Affairs Offices.
- Identification and analysis, by rural and urban, of the universe of services currently provided by County Veterans Affairs Offices.
- Examination of the actual use of County Veterans Affairs Offices services compared to potential demand.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

10. Status of Pennsylvania's Rural Nonprofits

Hit by a decline in donations and government funding in the wake of a deep recession, nonprofits, from volunteer fire departments to community action agencies, are undergoing painful restructuring including cut-backs and closings. Many of these nonprofits provide vital community services. This research will examine the status of rural Pennsylvania nonprofits that provide services through government contracts, in terms of their capacity and continuing ability to address essential community needs.

Key Expected Outcomes

- Examination of the number and type of nonprofits providing critical services through government contracts and description of the critical services that are provided.
- Analysis of total revenues and expenditures of nonprofits providing critical services, over the past five years.
- Public policy implications and relevant recommendations.

11. Assessment of Rural Secondary School Career Guidance Services

In 2010 nearly 39,000 of Pennsylvania's 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 secondary school career guidance services provided to youth in rural Pennsylvania.

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.

OPEN CALL TARGETED TOPIC

12. Open Call for Marcellus Shale Studies

The Department of Environmental Protection has issued nearly 2,400 Marcellus Shale well drilling permits since 2008. The exploration and development of this natural resource may affect many facets of rural economies and communities for decades to come. The Center for Rural Pennsylvania solicits research that will assist state and local decision makers as they address issues and opportunities surrounding Marcellus Shale development.

OPEN TOPICS FOR THE 2011 RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM

In addition to the targeted topics listed above, 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

13. Mini Grant: Assistance for the Unemployed

The Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS) provides varied services and linkages for the unemployed and underemployed. This research will review the specific programs and services available to rural residents with a particular focus on self-employment as the intended outcome.

Key Expected Outcomes

- Estimate of those obtaining CWDS services who have become self-employed.
- Description of the types and ranges of services available for those seeking self-employment.
- Rural and urban participation rates and trends in the State Entrepreneurial Assistance Program.
- Demographic profile of participants and analysis of outcomes after completing the program.

14. Mini Grant: Unemployment in Rural Pennsylvania

In 2009 the average rural unemployment rate in Pennsylvania was 9 percent, the highest it has been since 1992. In the past, most of the unemployed came from the manufacturing or industrial sectors. The new face of

unemployment is different. This research will analyze secondary data to develop a profile of the more recently unemployed in rural Pennsylvania.

Key Expected Outcomes

- Analysis of industry groups that have been affected by the current recession in terms of unemployment.
- Demographic profile of the unemployed.
- Examination of the duration of unemployment among the newly unemployed.

15. Mini Grant: Food Assistance Programs in Rural Pennsylvania

A USDA survey of food insecurity found that the number of people who were food insecure in 2009 rose sharply to 49 million, a 365 percent increase over the prior year. This represented 17.1 million households. The federal government's safety net for food assistance includes programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program. This research will examine the use of these programs in rural Pennsylvania.

Key Expected Outcomes

- Compilation and analysis of eligibility and participation rates in SNAP and WIC by rural county.

16. Community Development Grant, Loan and Loan Guarantee Programs in Rural Pennsylvania

Government often plays an important role in supporting community development projects through grants, loans and loan guarantees. This research will examine such programs to determine their impact in supporting economic development in rural Pennsylvania.

Key Expected Outcomes

- Analysis of relevant data to identify community development loan program use patterns, trends and impacts in rural Pennsylvania.

17. Mini Grant: Cancer Rates in Pennsylvania

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Health's Pennsylvania Cancer Incidence and Mortality Report, statewide, there were 73,895 cases of invasive cancer and 28,955 cancer deaths in 2006. This research will analyze data on cancer incidence and mortality, from a rural/urban perspective over the past 10 years.

Key Expected Outcomes

- Analysis of cancer rates, types of cancer and changes in rates and types over time between rural and urban Pennsylvania residents.
- Analysis of cancer rates, types of cancer and changes in rates and types over time between rural Pennsylvania and rural U.S. residents.
- Demographic analysis of rural/urban incidence, mortality rates and stages at diagnosis.

OPEN TOPICS FOR THE 2011 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.

The Center for



Rural Pennsylvania

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2011 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) _____

2011 Estimated Budget: _____

_____ Center for Rural Pennsylvania Funding
Other (Cash/In-kind)
2011 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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