

## RISE 2020: A New Framework for Supporting Rural Communities

In 2005, the Lieutenant Governor for the state of Indiana and the Purdue Center for Regional Development worked together to devise a new framework for understanding and resourcing rural communities within the Hoosier state. This effort to devote new attention to rural Indiana resulted in large part from the recognition that:

“Rural Indiana is a treasure and an asset not only to those who live and work there, but the whole state and nation as well. It includes 75 percent of our counties and tens of thousands of our people. It is dotted with hundreds of communities, farms, towns, and small cities. It is the source of much of our heritage, tradition and culture. It accounts for a huge share of the state’s land and natural resources.”<sup>1</sup>

What resulted from this recognition and subsequent efforts to approach rural communities differently was adoption of RISE 2020, the Rural Indiana Strategy for Excellence, and the creation of a new state office, the Office of Cultural and Rural Affairs (OCRA) by the Indiana legislature.

### RISE 2020: 7 Pillars

Essential to this new framework and strategic vision for Rural Indiana in the ensuing 15 years is a commitment to “breaking the boundaries” of past thinking that limited the rural vision almost solely to an agricultural one; and, new consideration of rural communities in light of their various assets – human, social, political, natural, built, cultural and financial – and within the Seven Pillars that will enable rural Indiana to excel:

1. ***Nurture Regional Frameworks*** –Establish appropriate regional frameworks to optimize rural competitive advantage in a rapidly changing global economy, building connectivity across public, private, nonprofit and academic sectors and institutions.
  2. ***Advance Civic Leadership and Engagement*** – Achieve a rural leadership renaissance, to broaden and deepen civic leadership and engagement and reinvigorate civic processes.
  3. ***Support Asset Based Community Development*** – Invest in rural Indiana’s unique, place-based assets, to fully optimize and enhance our diverse natural resources, the heritage, history, arts and cultures of our people and places, the integrity of our rural communities, and the human and social capital of all Hoosiers.
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4. ***Promote a Rural Innovation Culture*** – A “Rural Innovation Culture” is needed to enhance public and private entrepreneurship and build collaborative systems which sustain public, private and philanthropic commitments to achieve this goal.
5. ***Foster Youth Engagement*** – Engage the youth and young adults of rural Indiana in achieving the RISE 2020 vision, so they build a rural countryside in which they wish to stay, and to which other young people wish to come.
6. ***Increase Wealth Creation and Retention*** – Ensure that rural Indiana’s substantial wealth is retained, enhanced, and harnessed to generate new wealth and capture emerging economic opportunities for all Hoosiers.
7. ***Ensure Diversity, Access and Inclusiveness*** – Ensure all rural Hoosiers are engaged in achieving this vision and advantaged in its outcomes, by embracing approaches which specifically address the challenges faced by the poor, minorities, and those undervalued or with special needs and which ensure all Hoosiers have reasonable access to basic human and social services and are authentically included in community decision-making.

This seven-pillar framework has already stimulated two years of community planning and joint public and philanthropic funding to support rural Indiana communities to focus on five statewide priorities:

- *Develop a strategy to attract and expand philanthropic capital;*
- *Attract and retain entrepreneurial talent;*
- *Generate creative practices/programs for rural workforce development;*
- *Seek innovations in rural broadband development and deployment; and*
- *Expand human and health service delivery to reach marginalized populations.*

At a recent meeting of its Steering Committee and invited guests, National Rural Funders Collaborative members met to reflect on what application and impact this strategy might have for the marginalized populations with whom it is working in three focus regions: Mid South Delta/ Gulf Coast; Northern Great Plains and the Pajaro and Salinas Valleys in California.

We invite your views on our blog located at [www.nrfc.org](http://www.nrfc.org).

<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.in.gov/ocra/breakingtheboundaries.shtml>