



Regional Solutions for Rural and Urban Challenges

Insights #9

Recommendations for Research Entities

This *Insights* brief is one of a series produced as part of the *Regional Solutions for Rural and Urban Challenges* project led by LOCUS Impact Investing with funding support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The project explores the possibility that regional collaboration and solution-seeking can be an effective way of improving social and economic opportunity and health for all people and places within a region. We asked this question: Under what conditions are regional collaboration and solution-seeking approaches most effective in improving social and economic outcomes? We saw this as a counterpoint to the prevailing narrative of growing divisions between rural and urban populations along economic, social, cultural, and political lines.

To advance and support effective regional collaboration:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, together with U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration, should develop a program of academic research and extension engagement that will continually and systematically advance the base of knowledge about what works to improve social and economic outcomes through regional collaboration and solution seeking.

This agenda should be developed in consultation with subject matter experts in universities, the Community Development section of the Federal Reserve System and various Federal Reserve Banks, rural-focused organizations and philanthropies with significant research capacity, and rural practitioners,

Such a program may tap a diverse array of federal research entities such as the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Rural Development or the Economic Research Service, the HUD Office of Policy Development and Research, and EDA's Research and Evaluation Program within the Department of Commerce.

Specific areas of research might include:

1. Practical methods for identifying and valuing the contributions that rural economies and communities make to regional prosperity and well-being.
2. Analysis of public, private and philanthropic capital flows into regions and the impacts of different types of investment.
3. Creation of effective platforms to make the data accessible to regional decision makers.

4. Analysis of state budgets and legislation with an eye toward rural-urban balance.
5. Analysis of the rural and regional implications of national policy to better understand how existing programs, policies, funding formulas, etc. affect different geographies.
6. Application of effective community engagement strategies at the regional scale.
7. Approaches and methods for strengthening and creating cross-functional regional ecosystems.
8. Methods for integrating intentional equity policies and practices into regional policymaking and resource allocation.
9. Methods of facilitating regional rural-to-rural collaboration and solution-seeking in remote regions.
10. Tracking what works in international development and what other developed countries are doing to advance regional solutions and bringing key learnings to the United States.

Please visit <https://locusimpactinvesting.org/what-we-do/rural-work/regional-solutions/introduction/regional-solutions.html> to see all the materials produced for the *Regional Solutions for Rural and Urban Challenges* project.

When citing this work, please use the following: *Dabson, B., Okagaki, A., Markley, D., Green, T., Ferguson, K., Danis, C., & Lampkin, T. (2020), Regional Solutions for Rural and Urban Challenges. Richmond, VA: LOCUS Impact Investing, www.locusimpactinvesting.org.* The materials on this site may be downloaded and shared to advance policy, research, and practice only. Any other uses of the materials require permission from LOCUS Impact Investing.



Regional Solutions to Rural-Urban Challenges was a project of LOCUS Impact Investing, guided by a project team of experienced economic development practitioners, researchers and policy makers. This work was funded through a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, whose support is gratefully acknowledged.