

Community Strategies Group



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Bonita Robertson-Hardy

Chris Estes

Co-Executive Directors

**Black and Native Futures Fund: How Hubs and Understanding
Measurement are Key to Community Capacity**

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aspen institute



Hub of Hubs

Peer Learning

Field Development

Join at
slido.com
#9198 772



Opening Questions

Question 1

What are you hoping to learn more about in this session?

Question 2

Do you consider your school to be in a rural community or region?

Why Rural?

1 in 5 people in this country live in rural places



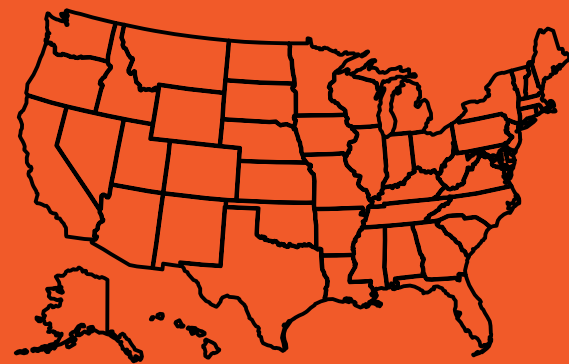
Why Equity?

70% of the 475 "persistent poverty" counties in the US are rural



Impacts of Rural Prosperity?

97% of America's land area is classified as rural



Why Health?

66% of federally designated health shortage areas are within rural



What Do the Numbers Show?



 **87%**

Census-enumerated American Indian
and Alaska Native population growth
between 2010 and 2020

 **54%**

Native population who reside
in rural and small-town areas



Advancing an **asset-based, wealth-building,** approach to rural **community and economic development.**



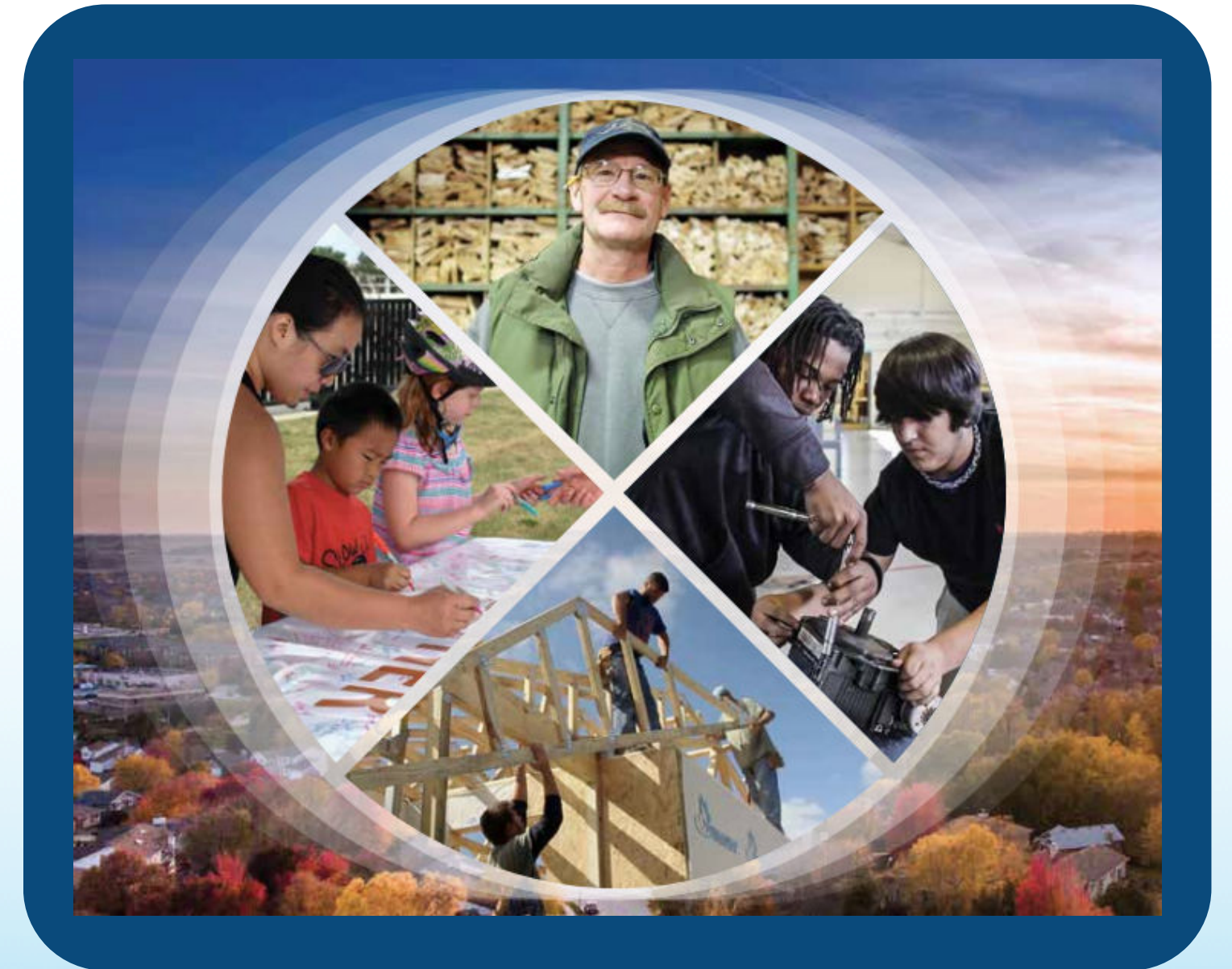
Qualities of Hubs



- 01 Think and work "Region."
- 02 Assemble the region for discovery and dialogue.
- 03 Are of their region, know their region, and build trust in their region.
- 04 Take the long view.
- 05 Bridge issues and silos.
- 06 Analyze at the systems level and intentionally address gaps in the systems.

Qualities of Hubs

- 07 Collaborate as an essential way of being and doing.
- 08 Create structures, products, and tools that foster collaborative doing.
- 09 Translate, span, and integrate action between local and national actors.
- 10 Flex, innovate, and become what they need to become to get the job done.
- 11 Take and tolerate risk.
- 12 Hold themselves accountable to the whole community.

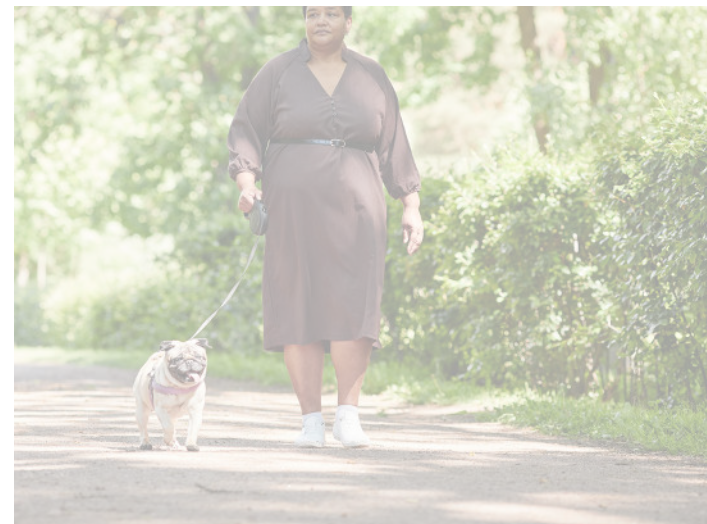






Community Capacity

The combined influence of a community's commitment, resources, and skills that can be deployed to build on community strengths and address community problems and opportunities.





Why Community Capacity Building is Important

Helps to improve ability of individuals, organizations, businesses, and government in their community to come together, learn, make well-reasoned decisions about the community's present and future and work together to carry out those decisions.

Eight Outcomes of Community Capacity Building

- Expanding diverse, inclusive citizen participation
- Expanding leadership base
- Strengthened individual skills
- Widely shared understanding and vision
- Strategic community agenda
- Consistent, tangible progress towards goals
- More effective community organizations and institutions
- Better resource utilization by the community





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Thrive Rural Framework: Field Perspectives Series

November 2021

NATIVE NATION BUILDING: IT HELPS RURAL AMERICA THRIVE

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THE LEGACY OF COLONIZATION

Before the United States of America was formed, more than 600 different nations and tribes called this vast region home.¹ Native peoples stewarded some 1.5 billion acres of land, water and other natural resources.² Relying on place-based ecological knowledge accumulated over centuries, tribes:

- Engaged in highly successful small- and large-scale resource management and production practices.³
- Supported community health and healing through culturally balanced relationships with lands, waters, and wild medicines and foods.⁴
- Operated self-sufficient economies that met community needs and enabled the development of far-reaching trade networks.⁵
- Organized and sustained complex governing and ceremonial systems that provided public goods, educated community members, resolved disputes, and managed intergovernmental relationships.⁶

Both oral history and physical records emphasize the know-how, adaptability, and innovative spirit of America's pre-colonial Indigenous peoples.

Soon after its founding, however, the United States government began a vigorous and long-lasting program to strip Native peoples of their assets, destroy their communities, and compel assimilation with the newly dominant European immigrant society. One set of orchestrated federal policies "removed" (evicted) eastern tribes from their lands and forced them to move west. Another, initiated by the Indian Appropriations Act of 1851,⁷ confined midcontinental and western tribes to reservations. Tens of thousands of Indians died during these involuntary migrations and periods of virtual imprisonment on marginal land bases; looking across the entire period of European colonization, estimates suggest that by



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Miriam Jorgensen is a political economist and policy scholar. Her work—in the United States, Canada, and Australia—has addressed issues as wide-ranging as housing, cultural stewardship, natural resources, land ownership, financial education, housing, and criminal justice, and focuses on the ways Indigenous nations' governance and sociocultural characteristics affect community development. She currently serves as research director of both the University of Arizona Native Nations Institute and the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development.



Stephanie Gutierrez
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A member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe of South Dakota, Stephanie has committed her life to working with and for Native communities. She is founder of Hope Nation, which provides transformational leadership and capacity building services to Indigenous and rural communities. Blending her business background with her social work degree and coaching practice, she provides a holistic approach to her work in child welfare, economic development and community development.

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Characteristics of Successful Native Nations



- 01 Exercise self-determination
- 02 Have capable governing institutions
- 03 Institutional structure fits its political culture
- 04 Strategic orientation to the long-term
- 05 Community-spirited, nation-building leadership

Strategies for Equitable Rural Development

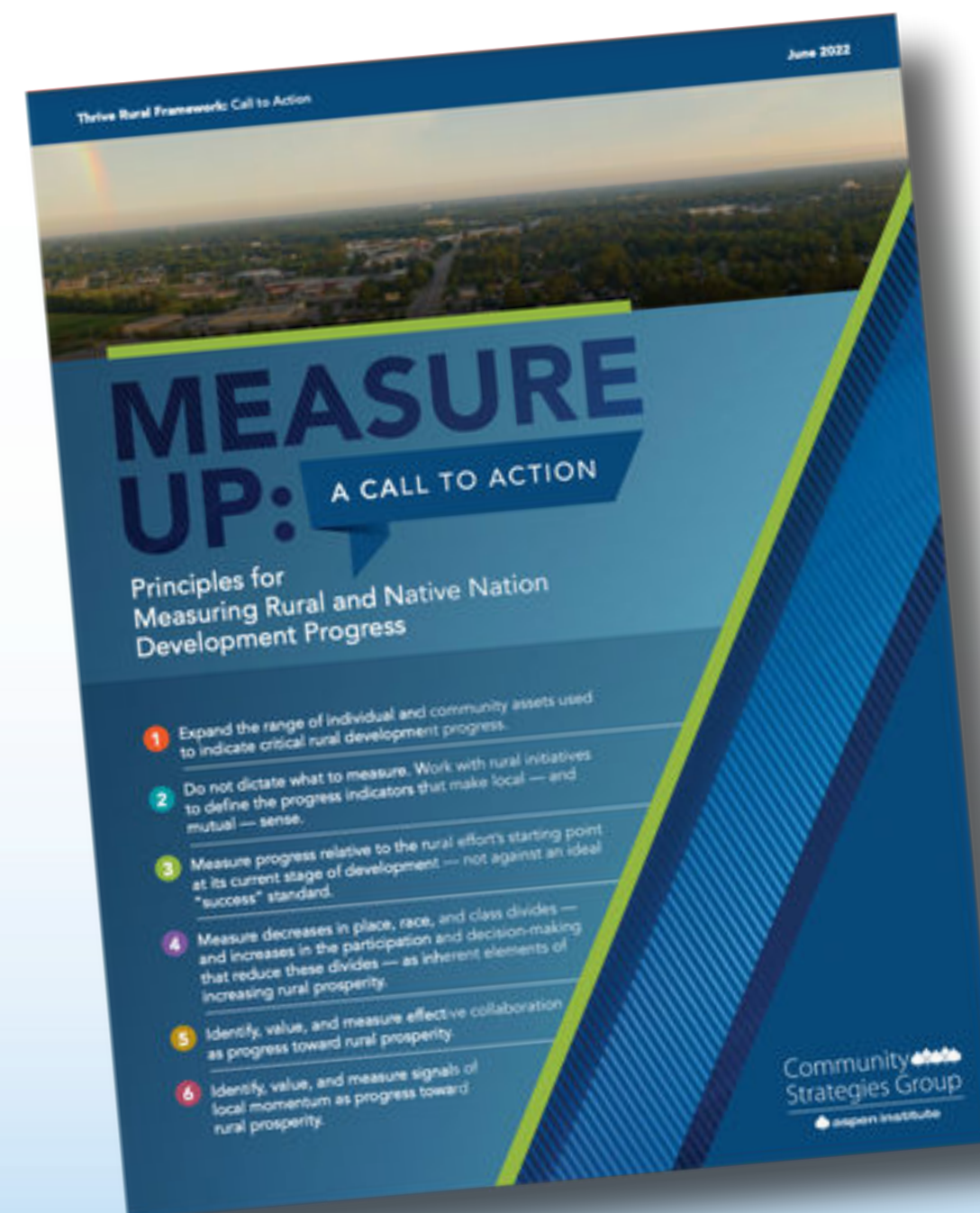
- Rural communities, and their governments and civil society organizations, must acknowledge the sovereignty of federally and state-recognized American Indian tribes and Alaska Native nations.
- Build relationships grounded in respect and mutuality between Native communities and their non-Native local and regional counterparts.
- Strengthen efforts to develop accurate data and timely data collection.

Why Measurement is Important



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Why Measurement is Important



A fundamental reassessment of how we measure rural development progress and who defines success



Funding pipelines from all sources will have far greater impact



There has to be mutual respect, and I think oftentimes communities value what funders bring to the table because of the connection to the financial resources that will come along with them. But that same respect isn't always given or shown by funders who walk into a space acknowledging the [local] work. . . If you don't demand that, it doesn't happen.



Felicia Lucky
President, Black Belt
Community Foundation

1

Expand the range of individual and community assets used to indicate critical rural development progress.

There is a need for broader, more holistic sets of community and economic development progress measurements.

“

The data for Puna says that 78% of households are ALICE (AssetLimited, Income-Constrained while Employed) and in poverty. A woman from Puna told us, ‘We might be the worst when it comes to income, but we are the best when it comes to ‘ohana (family): None of us are making it on our own, and all of us are making it because of ‘ohana.’ The definition of wealth for Hawai’i Island communities is very different from what’s being presented to us as a measure of success.

”



Janice Ikeda
Executive Director,
Vibrant Hawai’i

2

Do not dictate what to measure. Work with rural initiatives to define the progress indicators that make local - and mutual - sense.

Extensive reporting requirements are time-consuming, extractive, and inhibit grantee effectiveness.

“

It seems to me that in rural communities there may be a different quality of conversation about what matters, because of the strength and importance of our social network and our quality of life, more so than how much someone makes, or their status.

”



Ajulo Othow
Founder and CEO,
EnerWealth Solutions

3

Measure progress relative to the rural effort's starting point at its current stage of development – not against an ideal “success” standard.

More progress is made when communities are allowed to assess progress from their own starting points.

“

How you perceive is how you proceed. I believe this and I witness misperceptions about Native America all the time. These misperceptions limit our opportunities and we use a lot of resources to break down these misperceptions just to get to a starting point with funders.



Lakota Vogel
Executive Director, Four Bands
Community Fund

”



Measure decreases in place, race, and class divides – and increases in the participation and decision-making that reduce these divides – as inherent elements of increasing rural prosperity.

Policy and investment designers should reach out to the “unreached rural” in every region, race, and class.



To us, rural is a culture, and when we define it as a culture and make it a topic around equity, I think it’s harder to marginalize rural people in rural places. [A] huge part is just ensuring that people understand who we are and that we have representation in those different buckets – to not only see our successes and see our wins, but to understand how to digest our data and make it a story that’s positive and not weaponize it against us.



Justin Archer Burch
Former Director of Workforce
Development, Rural LISC



5

Identify, value, and measure effective collaboration as progress toward rural prosperity.

Collaboration must be built on trust, shared understanding and goals, broad participation and decision-making across stakeholders

“

[In rural America] nobody has the resources to go it alone. One of the things it takes to do better – that almost no funding streams are willing to pay for – is collaboration. They’re willing to pay for that particular project, but the glue that holds it all together is just probably the most difficult piece to find support for in rural communities.

”



John Molinaro
Principal,
RES Associates, LLC

6

Identify, value, and measure signals of local momentum as progress toward rural prosperity.

Youth engagement is a particularly good indicator of momentum - it increases young adults' belief that they can find a way to stay in the community.

“

Our native youth, of the ones I was able to survey on Cheyenne River, feel optimistic that they can do better than what their parents had access to. That is a direct reflection of how recently colonization happened to us. You can tell from your grandma going to [non-Native] boarding school that “I’m going to have a better access to education or better opportunity access than what my grandma did.” I think that optimism from youth could be a good measurement of success in rural America.

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Lakota Vogel
Executive Director,
Four Bands Community Fund