

*Center for*

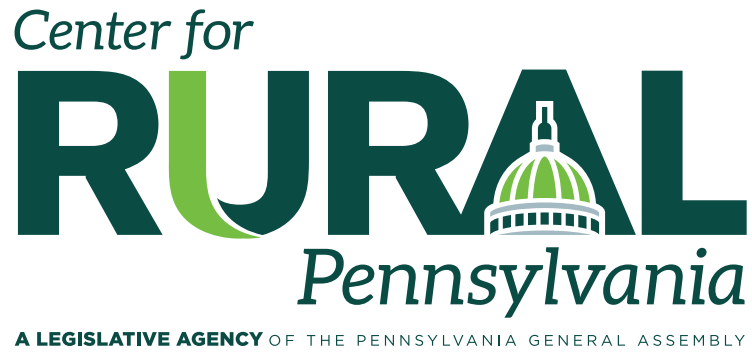
**RURRAL**



*Pennsylvania*

**A LEGISLATIVE AGENCY** OF THE PENNSYLVANIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**2026 Research Grant Program  
Special Request for Proposals**



**CENTER FOR RURAL PENNSYLVANIA  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

*CHAIRMAN*  
SENATOR GENE YAW

*VICE CHAIRMAN*  
REPRESENTATIVE EDDIE DAY PASHINSKI

*SECRETARY*  
DR. NANCY FALVO  
*PENNSYLVANIA WESTERN UNIVERSITY CLARION*

*TREASURER*  
MR. STEPHEN M. BRAME  
*GOVERNOR'S REPRESENTATIVE*

SENATOR JUDY SCHWANK  
REPRESENTATIVE DAN MOUL

DR. DAVID ABLER  
*THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY*

MR. RICHARD ESCH  
*UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH*

DR. JEFFREY HYDE  
*PENN STATE EXTENSION*

MS. SHANNON M. MUNRO  
*PENNSYLVANIA COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY*

DR. CHARLES PATTERSON  
*SHIPPENSBURG UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA*

MS. SUSAN SNELICK  
*NORTHERN PENNSYLVANIA REGIONAL COLLEGE*

MR. DARRIN YOUKER  
*GOVERNOR'S REPRESENTATIVE*

## 2026 Special Request for Proposals

The Center welcomes proposals about regionalization of police services in rural Pennsylvania. A number of municipalities in the state have regionalized their police services or contracted for services with other municipalities, while others rely solely upon the Pennsylvania State Police ([Police Service Map](#)).

The overall objectives of the research design should be to explain why regionalization or contracting services occurs in rural municipalities, and, considering the impetus behind any such decision, what the outcomes of regionalization are. When completed, the results should provide evidence to help inform the General Assembly, rural municipalities, and other stakeholders about the benefits and/or challenges of regionalization or consolidation of services.

Given the decentralized nature of municipal policing data in Pennsylvania, applicants should anticipate that administrative and financial data may not be standardized across jurisdictions. Proposals should describe how the research team will address data availability and comparability challenges, including, where appropriate, strategies for collecting, cleaning, and harmonizing data from multiple sources (e.g., municipal budgets, intergovernmental agreements, and state datasets). The Center recognizes that different methodological approaches may be appropriate; however, proposals should demonstrate alignment between the selected methods and the types of conclusions the study seeks to draw.

1. An inventory of municipalities with current or past regionalized or contracted police services, including an analysis of how these arrangements have changed over time at the municipal level.
2. A clear outline of the process(es) of regionalization and an analysis of related agreements or documents for regionalization or contracted services, including the reasons for such arrangements.
3. Analysis of available information and data to assess the quality, outcomes, and costs of police services before and after regionalization, partnerships, or contracts. Proposals should clearly identify the types of data or evidence that will be used and explain how the selected methods support valid and policy-relevant conclusions. Where proposals include comparative or outcome-based analysis across jurisdictions or over time, applicants should describe how they will address differences in data availability and structure, including, where appropriate, approaches to developing comparable measures across municipalities.
4. Capacity of rural municipalities to both provide police services and adequately assess and measure the costs, quality, and outcomes of those services or changes to services.
5. Methods may be qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods in design. Proposals should clearly explain why the selected methods are appropriate to the research questions, what data or evidence will be used, and how each method will contribute distinct analytical value.

Proposals should align research questions, data sources, and methods. Projects should demonstrate a credible plan for using administrative or other objective data to evaluate outcomes; research goals related to process, governance or capacity may include qualitative approaches.

Research designs that compare rural and small urban police departments may be considered; similarly, an examination of the challenges and benefits of rural municipal police departments relative to those that regionalize or contract for services is also an option.

Proposals for awards of up to \$60,000 will be accepted.

## Eligibility

The Center’s enabling legislation allows the Center to award grants 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 strongly encouraged.

## 2026 Special Request for Proposals (RFP) Grant Application Process and Timeline

For the 2026 Special RFP, interested faculty can obtain a copy of the proposal submission form from the Center’s Assistant Director, Dr. Laura Dimino, via email: [LDimino@rural.pa.gov](mailto:LDimino@rural.pa.gov). Questions or meeting requests should be directed to the Assistant Director, as well.

The Center’s 2026 Special RFP timeline is outlined below:

<b>2026 Special RFP Grant Program Timeline</b>	<b>Date(s) or Deadline</b>
1. Request for proposals is released	May 2026
2. Deadline for submission of proposals	<b>June 22, 2026, at 4:00 p.m.</b>
3. Proposal review; possible discussions via Zoom with applicants	July 2026
4. Center’s Board of Directors selects the project for funding	August 2026
5. Work plan is finalized and the cooperative agreement is issued and signed	September/October 2026
6. Final revised report completed	October 2027