



A LEGISLATIVE AGENCY OF THE PENNSYLVANIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2027 Request for Proposals

Laura R. Dimino, Ph.D., Assistant Director
Ldimino@rural.pa.gov

625 Forster Street, Room 902, Harrisburg, PA, 17120
(717)787-9555
www.rural.pa.gov

Today's Agenda



- **Background & mission of the Center for Rural Pennsylvania**
- **Grant Program objectives, eligibility, process, timeline, topics**
- **Evaluation process**
- **Tips and advice**
- **Q & A**



Center for Rural Pennsylvania

**Legislative research agency of the Pennsylvania General Assembly
(Act 16, 1987 & Act 12, 2009)**

Mandates

- Administer grants to conduct research on rural conditions.
- Maintain a database on rural conditions and needs.

We are...

- Bipartisan
- Governed by our Board of Directors

Other Initiatives:

- Hearings, testimony, presentations, inquiries, Commission support

Research Grant Objectives

- Concise report with in-depth analysis of an important rural issue.
- Answers to questions that are of interest to the public sector.
- Results that are applicable across the state.
- New (primary) data or information.
- Objective and substantiated policy considerations for the General Assembly or other county and local decision makers.
- Contributions to the Center's rural data collection.



The Project Director (PI) Eligibility

The Center's grant program awards grants to eligible faculty members of:

- ❖ The Pennsylvania State University
- ❖ Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) universities
- ❖ The regional campuses of the University of Pittsburgh
(Bradford, Titusville, Greensburg, Johnstown)



PennState



University of
Pittsburgh

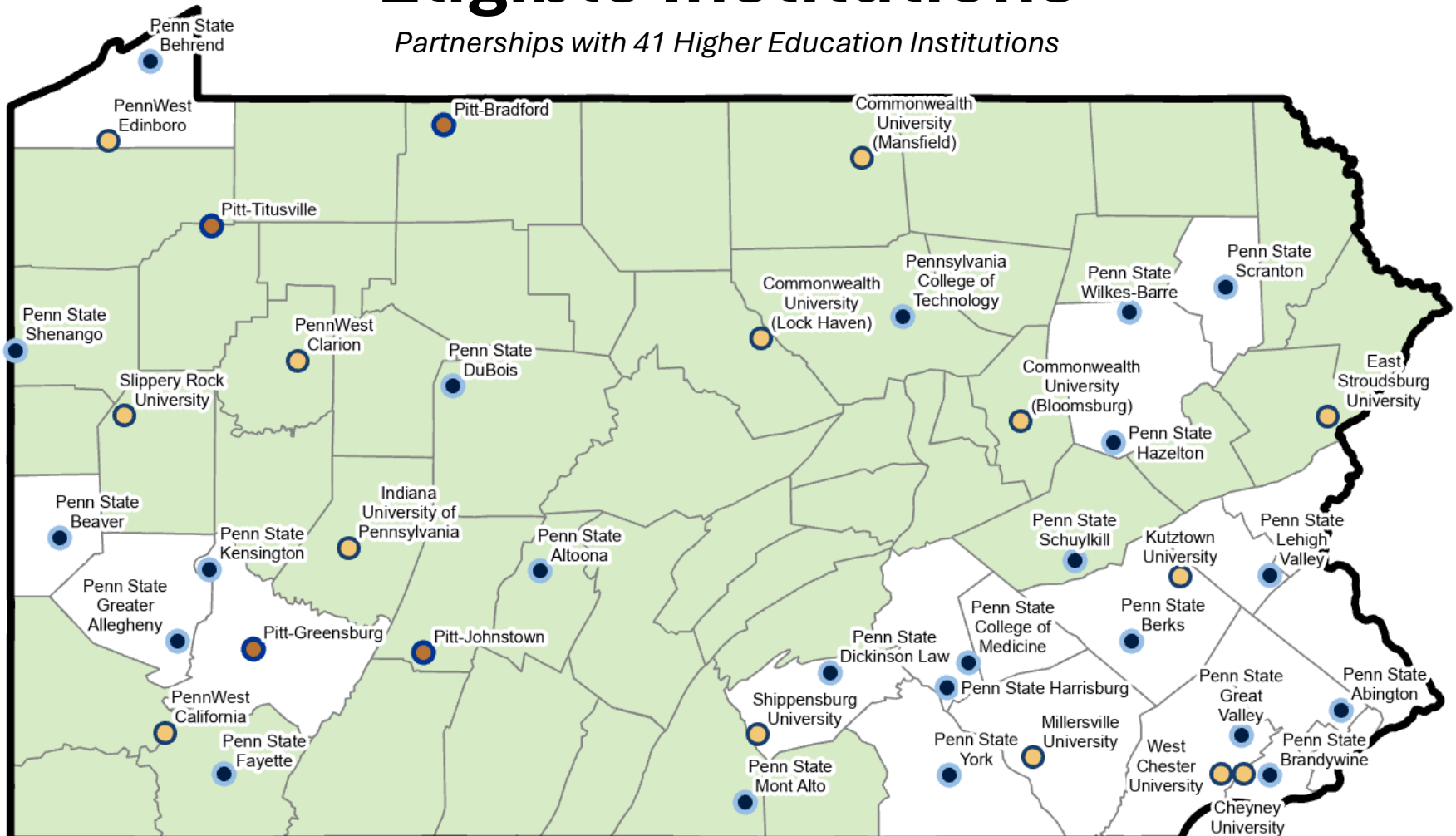


PASSHE

Pennsylvania State System
of Higher Education

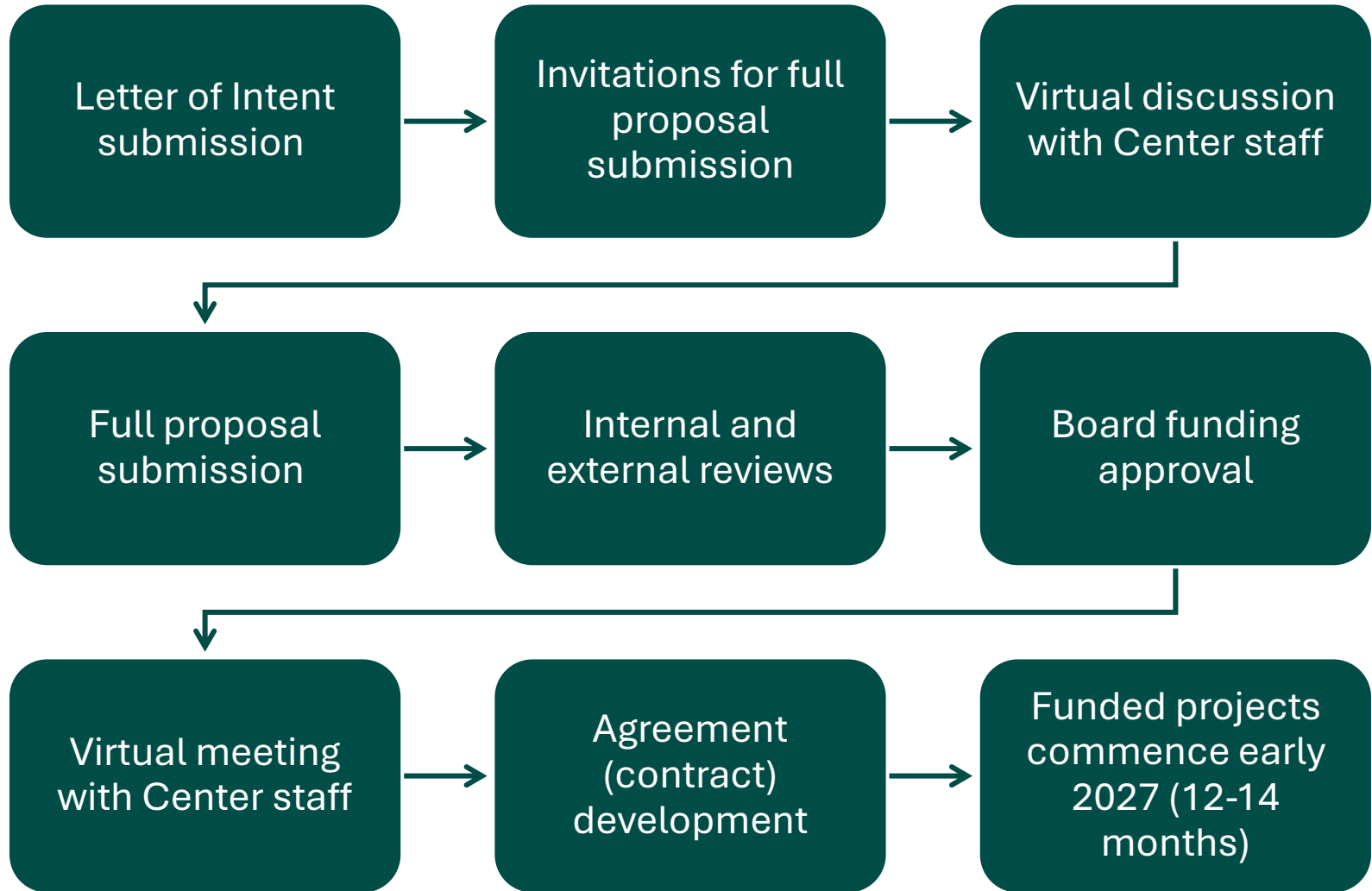
Eligible Institutions

Partnerships with 41 Higher Education Institutions



- Rural County
- Urban County
- Pennsylvania State System
- University of Pittsburgh Regional Campus
- Penn State University

2027 RFP: *Process Overview*



2027 RFP Timeline

- RFP released, **March 2026**
- Deadline for submission of Letters of Intent, Monday, **June 1, 2026, at 4:00p.m.** Eastern time.
- Letters of Intent are reviewed by **July 8, 2026.** Successful applicants are invited to submit a full proposal.
- Proposal planning virtual meetings with applicants, **July-August 2026.**
- Deadline for full proposal submissions, Friday, **September 18, 2026 at 4 p.m.**
- Review process, including external peer reviews.
- Center's Board of Directors approves projects for funding, **December 2026.**
- Final project details are reviewed, **early January 2027.**
- Cooperative Agreements are drafted **February 2026,** then signed.



Targeted Themes 2027

Economic Development

Health and Wellness

Agriculture and the Environment

Targeted Topics 2027



1) Public Sector Interventions and Rural Development Outcomes



2) Extent and Impact of Private Investment in Workforce Development



3) Aging in Place Models for Health Services in Rural Communities



4) Health-related Service Delivery in Rural Public School Districts



5) Incentivizing New Farmers, Specialty Crops and Areas of Growth



6) Impact of Conservation and Environmental Policies on Agriculture & Rural Communities

Open Topics



Must be related to one or more of our themes or mandated research areas



You can propose a topic for a full \$60,000 grant, or we accept proposals for a smaller grant, or mini-grant



Difference from targeted topics: **you must justify the need and specify key outcomes**

Mandated Research Areas

1. Rural people and communities
2. Economic development
3. Local government finance and administration
4. Community services
5. Natural resources and environment
6. Rural values and social change
7. Educational outreach
8. Agriculture
9. Health and welfare concerns

Grants Awarded



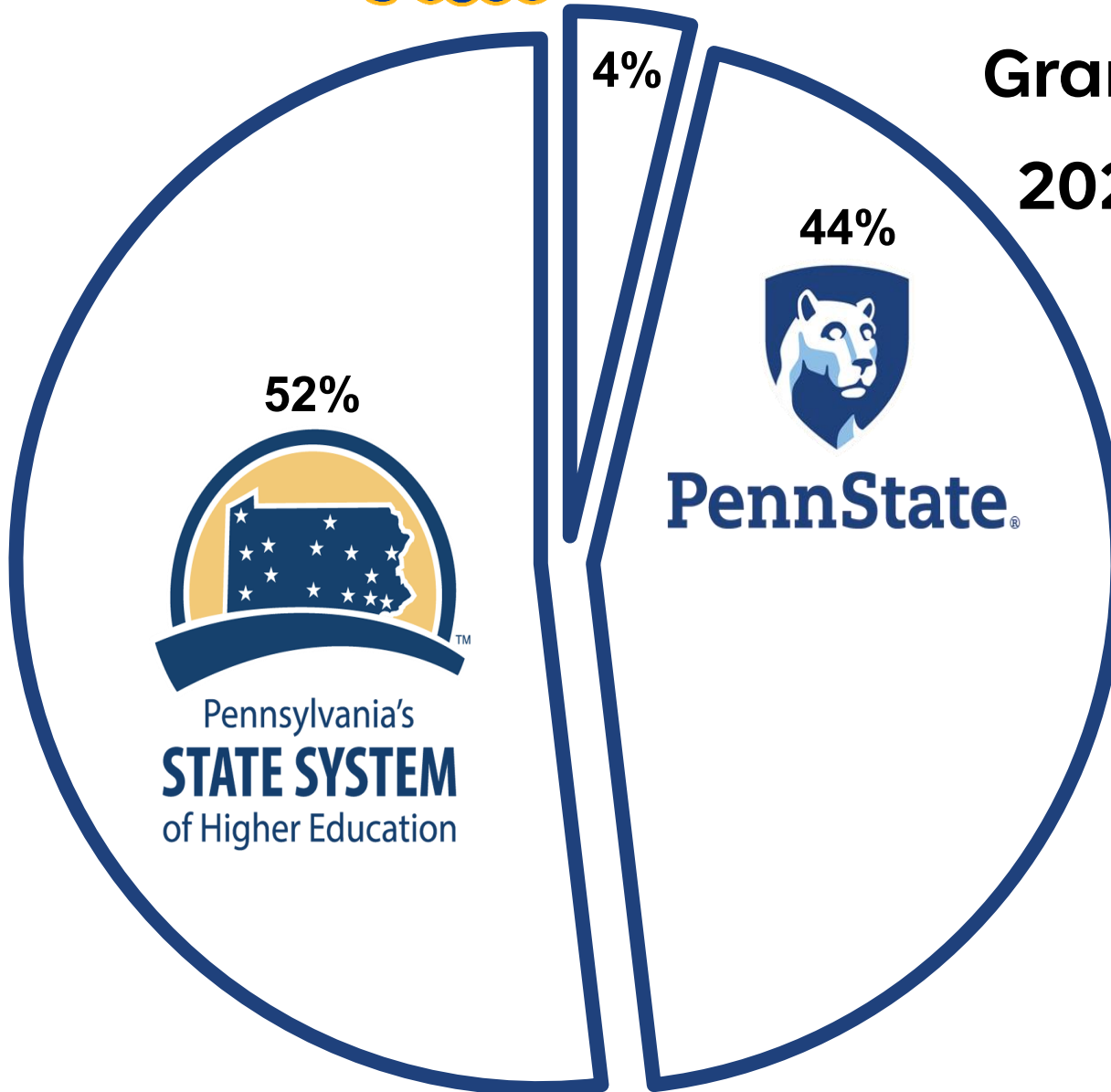
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Total Grants Awarded

Grant Rounds,

2022 – 2026

N = 27



Grant Submissions

Grant Years 2021-2023 (averages)

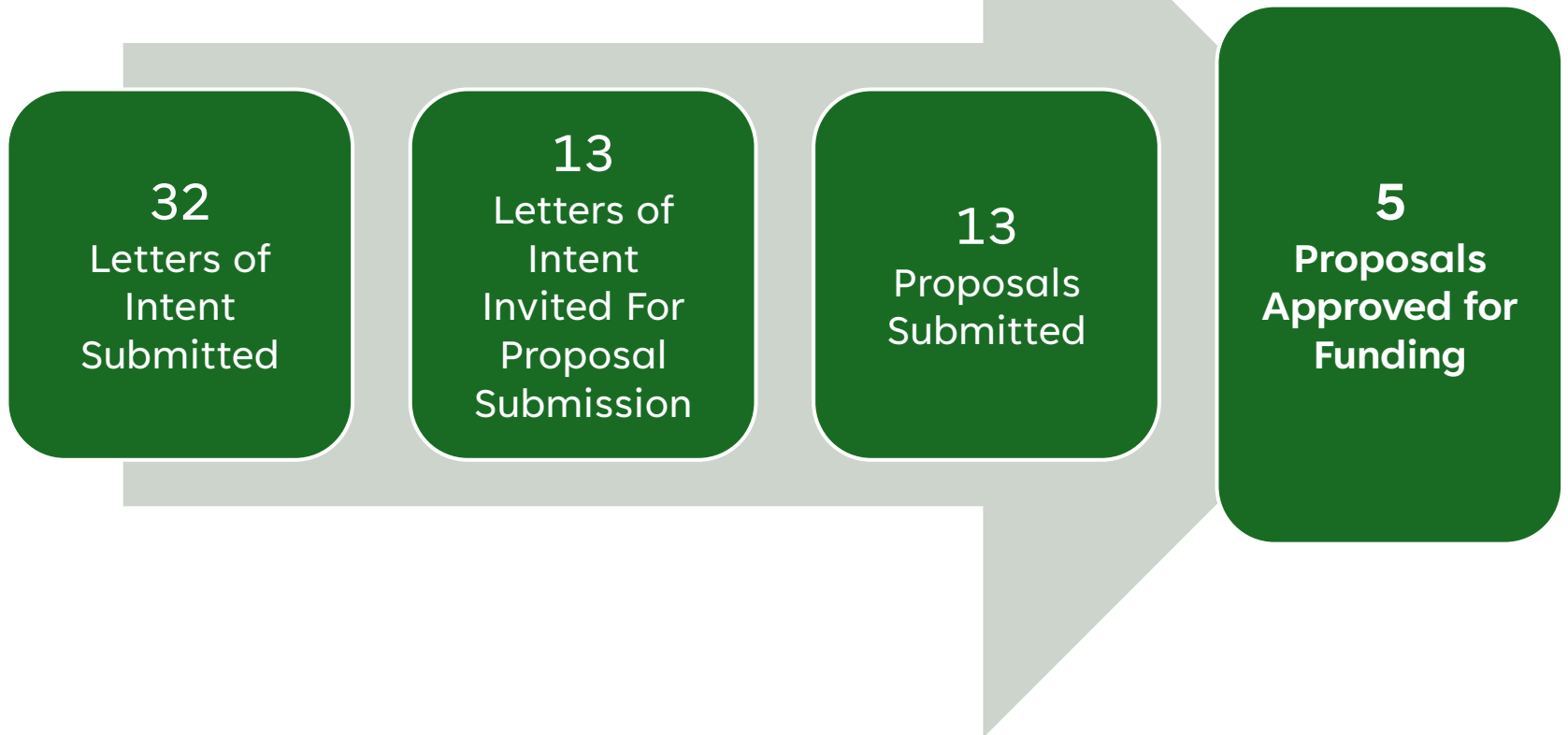
37 Letters of Intent Submitted

15 Letters of Intent Approved For Full Proposal Submission

12 Proposals Submitted

6 Proposals Approved for Funding

Grant Submissions 2024-2026 (averages)





First Step: Letter of Intent

Include:

- Project title & description (2-page maximum)
- Proposed scope of work and methods
- Anticipated policy implications
- Partners and subcontractors
- Previous projects, publications
- Estimated budget



Budget Highlights

- Maximum funding levels
 - Full year research grants: \$60,000
 - Mini research grants: \$18,000
- University support
- Subcontractors and partners
- Summer stipends for faculty permitted

Tips for Success!





Letter of Intent



Cite a few **recent** empirical findings related to the topic



Be clear about what questions you can answer and why they are of interest to policy makers



Offer a compelling rationale for the project



Geography matters



Share details about methodology



Policy Focus

- Identify 2-3 potential state or local policies, ordinances, or regulations that may be affected by the research findings.
- The research must be relevant and important to the public sector.



Consider the Audience

Members of the General Assembly, Executive Branch Departments,
County, or Municipal Officials

**Remember to write for a lay audience and
use concise language.**

Common Application Weaknesses

- Vague or unrealistic goals and objectives
- Undeveloped public policy relevance and implications or topic is too far removed from the public sector
- No recent relevant research is cited
- Weak or vague methodology
- Lack of relevance to rural areas
- Research scope is too narrow
- No letters of support from key partners or stakeholders
- Writing is too scientific or academic





The Proposal

- Clear and plausible methodology
- Rural focus (with the option to compare/contrast urban and rural)
- Has clear knowledge goals and objectives
- Has outcomes and deliverables directly linked to goals and objectives
- Addresses a current issue or priority
- Concise, organized and clear
- Relevance to current policy makers

Grant Reports

- Cooperative process with Center staff
- Policy based research
- Rural Pennsylvania focus
- Nonacademic audience
- Description, analysis *and* synthesis
- Brevity





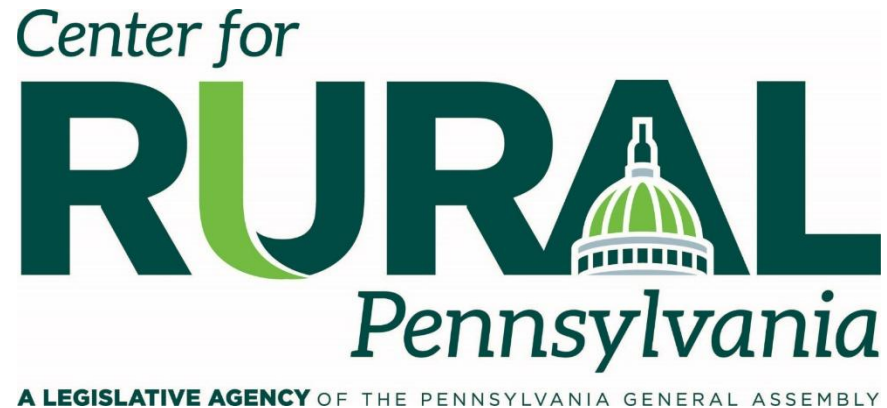
PennState University Libraries

Starting in 2022, all research reports will be published
with Penn State University Libraries

A photograph of two hikers on a rocky mountain peak. One hiker, wearing a yellow jacket and a white helmet, is leaning forward to assist another hiker, who is wearing a red jacket and a red beanie. They are both wearing backpacks. The background is a blue sky with white clouds. The foreground is a large, out-of-focus rock.

We are here to help!

**Call or email to discuss
your topic prior to
submission of the Letter
of Intent**



Thank You

Questions or research ideas?– contact us!

Office Phone: (717) 787-9555

or visit www.rural.pa.gov

Find us on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn!

Our Staff:

Zachary L. Adams, Executive Director

Laura R. Dimino, Ph.D., Assistant Director (LDimino@rural.pa.gov)

Michaela Miller, Quantitative Data Analyst

Kaitlyn Goode, Data Visualization Specialist

Katie Park, Communications Manager

Linda Hinson, Office Manager