



# Venango County

## Courthouse Annex

1174 Elk Street Franklin, PA 16323  
Phone: 814/432-9512 FAX 814/432-4741  
Website: [www.co.venango.pa.us](http://www.co.venango.pa.us)

**Board of Commissioners**  
Samuel H. Breene  
Kenneth J. Bryan  
Albert “Chip” Abramovic

**Solicitor**  
Richard Winkler

**Chief Clerk/Administrator**  
Sabrina S. Backer

Center for Rural Pennsylvania presentation January 31, 2024

Rural Pennsylvania is having issues with access to rural healthcare, education, and basic services. Things which are considered anchor institutions. Some of this is attributed to rural location and low populations. As our opportunities are being relocated to urban areas the attraction for new providers is bleak, especially with a population decline outlook. Currently our healthcare providers are struggling to find staff which is leading services to be moved in a further direction away from rural areas and our local institutions are struggling to find students which help create a pipeline to our local hospitals. Our specialty services are at full capacity with unrealistic wait times to see a provider. This isn't only in western side of the state but state wide. As Pennsylvania's population is aging, the access to care is the utmost importance to keep us as one of the strongest states in the nation, also with the deterioration of access this leaves us at a competitive disadvantage.

Some opportunities to look at to correct a situation on the verge of collapse is to look are regional hubs, some of our providers are currently doing this in a smaller scale. Whereas a hub system centered around educational incentives to support areas where access is a struggle. I also look at government jobs as a tool to pilot an incentive educational system, government has a lower pay scale but a great benefit package compared to the private sector. Many government careers require a higher level of education, but the pay is substantially less than private industry. With this we are often struggling to find employment especially in rural Pennsylvania. An incentive-based system in education can lead to opportunities for graduates to enter into the government workforce which can alleviate college debt. Trying to work on this as a pilot can lead to a comparable to other areas of focus which is being impacted in rural Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania has one of the highest per capita of higher education opportunities in the nation. With this we still are having a population decline and also a workforce we aren't capturing from the educational level. It wouldn't take much but a few tweaks to how we work on connecting industry needs in rural and also those students who have a desire to learn and grow a great career can be attainable.

Pennsylvania is one of the prettiest states in the nation, with close geographical location to most major metropolitan areas, having a blend of rural and urban opportunities only helps this commonwealth's growth flourish. If we don't act fast, we can be left behind and the rural vs urban divide with only grow further apart.

Sincerely,

Albert “Chip” Abramovic