

RURAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES IMPACT SNAPSHOT

Q1 2021



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STRONGER RURAL COMMUNITIES

25
Active
Community Efforts

82
Rural
Leaders
Trained

79
Funders
Engaged

20
Plans
Created or
Supported

170
Partner
Organizations
Engaged

102
Communities
Supported/
Strengthened

STRONGER RURAL PEOPLE

1,021
Community
Members Engaged

59
Events
Strengthening
Connections

166
Youth &
BIPOC
Trained

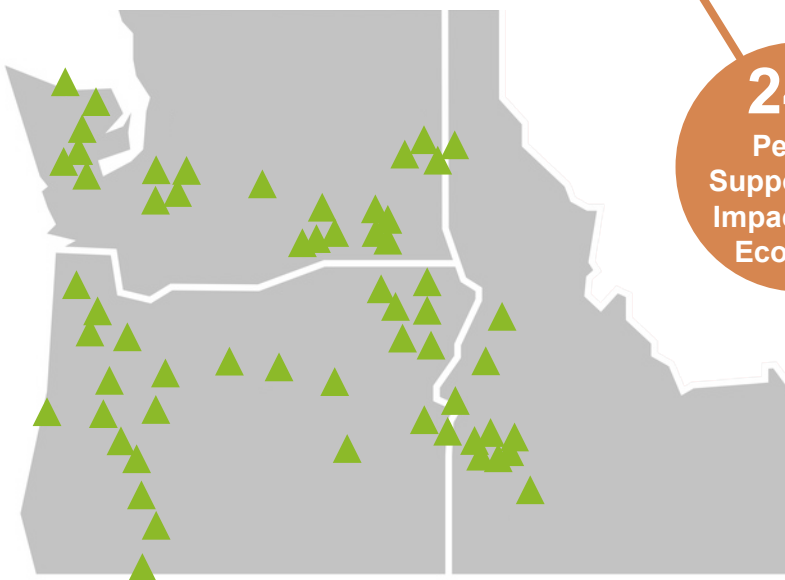
836
People at
Events

STRONGER RURAL ECONOMIES

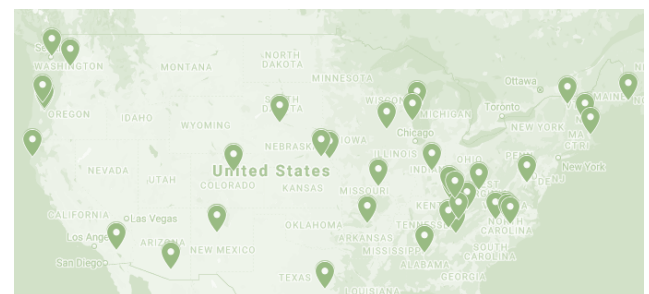
194
Businesses
Supported/
Engaged

More Than
\$305,000
Leveraged

240
People
Supported to
Impact Their
Economy



At the RuraLead Ideas Summit in March and April, we also worked alongside initiative partners and "RuraLead Field Builders" from across the U.S.



SPOTLIGHT ON THE RURALEAD LEARNING INITIATIVE

RuraLead is a learning initiative aimed at understanding the current state of rural leadership development around the nation and charting a path forward. For more than a year, RDI and partners have been involved in:

- Creating an **inventory** of nationwide rural leadership development efforts
Does your organization develop rural or rural Native leaders?
[Complete the inventory!](#)
- Convening virtual regional **learning journeys** in Appalachia, the South, the Midwest, and the Northwest, with an Indigenous peoples' conversation currently underway.
- Conducting dozens of **interviews** with leaders, leadership development practitioners, and funders to understand the current landscape of rural leadership.
- Coordinating and participating in the **RuraLead Ideas Summit** in March and April. This culminating event was a convening of rural leadership development practitioners – RuraLead Field Builders – from across the nation working to advance rural equity, development, opportunity, and prosperity, with an opportunity to turn learning into action. On March 23, RuraLead partners and Field Builders were joined by funders, leaders, and other stakeholders in discussions of how to strengthen rural leadership development from both the community perspective and resource provider perspective.



In Their Words:

"Equitable leadership must be community led."

"Research indicates that anything a community does, deliberately, to strengthen leadership will pay off in better outcomes for individuals, organizations and the community as a whole."

"Leaders or communities that have trained leaders in an entrepreneurial model seem to have better outcomes."

"There's this network of things that happen in rural communities that don't happen in the same way in a lot of urban communities. Understanding that deep capacity that rural communities have, that sense of community engagement and caring and relationship, that's a real asset."

"My own leadership story really begins with being invited to take on roles and responsibilities in the community... When you're invited, you understand people recognize something that you can contribute. People don't often think of themselves as leaders, and they need that outside recognition to provide them with the confidence to get involved."

Next Steps:

RuraLead is now working to synthesize learning; next, we'll share actionable recommendations for how to create an ecosystem that provides resources and support to rural leaders. It is our hope that, in turn, they and their communities can thrive. Support for this initiative was provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Learn More: ruralead.org

You're invited to join us June 3 to learn more about the RuraLead Initiative and participate in conversations about how we can work together toward more prosperous, equitable rural communities: rdiinc.org/rural-forward