



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

National Rural Development Partnership

The mission of the Partnership is to improve the quality of life in rural America. The National Rural Development Partnership (NRDP) is a multi-faceted organization bringing together partners from all levels of government as well as private for profit and non-profit organizations to address the needs of rural America. The National Rural Development Partnership acts as a non-partisan forum for identifying, discussing, and acting on issues affecting rural America. The NRDP does not supplant, duplicate, or compete with any program, but rather facilitates coordination and collaboration among its partners to improve implementation of rural programs.

Background

The National Rural Development Partnership (NRDP) works to strengthen rural America through collaboration and cooperation among its partners. The NRDP brings together partners from local, state, tribal, and federal governments, as well as from the for-profit and nonprofit private sector.

State Rural Development Councils

There are currently 28 State Rural Development Councils (SRDCs). The State Councils form the primary components of the Partnership and bring together key rural players in their states to address critical community concerns and to respond to fast-breaking opportunities. State Councils are responsible for creating their own mission, structure, operating guidelines, and action plan. Each Council hires a senior-level executive director who works with the Council leadership.

In addition to facilitating coordination and collaboration on a state level, SRDCs also work through a national network to affect major change on a regional and national level. SRDCs provides a connection between the government and the population and have been utilized to both spread new and updated information on government and private sector programs and opportunities. In addition to information dissemination, SRDCs through their success stories and other publications and work are ideal vehicles for feedback to the national office. NRDP Authorization – originally part of the [2002 Farm Bill](#) (P.L. 107-171), the NRDP was re-authorized in the 2008 and 2014 Farm Bill.

- [Contact a State Council](#)

History

The National Rural Development Partnership has roots in the Rural Development Act of 1972, which directed the Secretary of Agriculture to coordinate a nationwide rural development program with those of State and local governments. The Rural Development Policy Act of 1980 strengthened these provisions and called for a rural development policy and strategy, as well as annual updates. The first major federal initiative along these lines occurred in April 1989, with the formation of an Interagency Working Group on Rural Development within the White House Economic Policy Council. The working group was directed to analyze and evaluate existing Federal rural development programs and develop policy options for improving their coordination and execution. They issued a report entitled *Rural Economic Development for the 90's: A Presidential Initiative* in January 1990.

What is today referred to as the National Rural Development Partnership was first called, in 1990, the President's Initiative on Rural America. In January of that year, the President ordered the Secretary of Agriculture to implement six proposals to improve the coordination of rural development programs and serve as a catalyst for future initiatives. One proposal was to form a President's Council on Rural America, with members drawn from farmers, State and local governments, rural businesses, and high-technology industries to advise the Federal Government on improving Federal rural development policy. A second was for each State to establish a rural development council to coordinate Federal rural development programs in its region. The Deputy Under Secretary for Small Communities and Rural Development was appointed to lead the interdepartmental rural development effort. The *President's Initiative on Rural America* later became the *National Initiative on Rural America*.

Under the umbrella of the Under Secretary, individuals from various federal agencies and other organizations formed the Monday Management Group. Originally composed of representatives from 18



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federal agencies, the National Governors' Association (NGA) and several public interest groups, this body developed the core implementation guidelines and structure for the Partnership. In a few years the membership of this group swelled upwards of 70 members and constituted the central body of the Partnership. The name of this group was changed to the National Rural Development Council in the winter of 1994. At the same time, the National Initiative on Rural America was renamed the National Rural Development Partnership to better communicate the missions, principles, and roles of the participants.

Concurrent with the growth of NRDC's membership, the office of the Under Secretary worked to set up eight pilot SRDCs in late 1990: Kansas, Maine, Mississippi, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas and Washington. As of the summer of 1992, there were 32 SRDCs. By 2000, 40 State Rural Development Councils had been established. In 2009, there were 28 federally recognized SRDCs.