

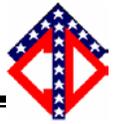


**Roles, Responsibilities, and Staffing Considerations of Rural
Development Community Development Programs**

Office of Community Development

June 2002

Washington, DC



**DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES¹ OF
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM DIRECTORS (CDPD) &
COMMUNITY RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT SPECIALISTS (CRDS)**

Last Update December 5, 2001

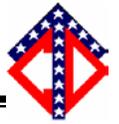
Rural Development (RD) State offices and their various field offices are the delivery point for USDA's mandate to provide leadership for the coordination of Federal programs at the local level that ensure a cohesive system of service delivery to rural America. Rural Development Community Development staff play many roles during the conduct of their mission. All of the duties below are being performed somewhere within the world of USDA Rural Development, though not all of them consistently in every state. The purpose of this RD Community Development roles and responsibilities document is to provide field staff with guidance on designing a richer and fuller Community Development program within their state.

Rural Development State Offices are responsible for:

- Identifying emerging, state and local rural issues and needs;
- Conducting long term RD program planning for the state;
- Coordinating the strategic planning efforts of Indian tribes with statewide strategic plans;
- Developing and implementing rural development pilot projects and implementing rural development policy guidelines;
- Designing, maintaining and monitoring a rural development strategy formulation for communities;
- Supporting communities participating in the Community Empowerment Program;
- Monitoring the community development activities of field offices in the state; and
- Day to day management operations of Rural Development's Community Development mission in the state.

These operations may be further specified in the following categories.

¹ This summary is an attempt to identify the many coordinating, administrative, and fieldwork duties and responsibilities associated with a successful Community Development program effort. It is not to be considered complete. For further guidance, contact your OCD National Office Desk Officer at 1-800-645-4712.



Review and Evaluation of Community Development Programs

Participate in each scheduled SIR to review performance of community development objectives. Analyze results and track trends from SIR's. (CDPD, CRDS)

Coordinate studies of rural area needs within the state to identify specific/common rural development concerns, needs, or opportunities. (CDPM, CRDS)

Identify impediments that affect rural development and Community Development program operations or service delivery systems. Review agency programs for overall effectiveness and rural development program impacts. Analyze data or information; evaluate findings, draw inferences/conclusions; make appropriate corrective or enhancement recommendations; and prepare narrative reports or present briefings on findings for presentation to State Director, (CDPM, CRDS)

Insure supported communities meet all federal equal opportunity-affirmative employment-civil rights requirements in all aspects of program planning and service delivery. (CDPD)

Develop Staff Community Development Training priorities using a variety of information sources including SIR reports (weaknesses, strengths, etc.) (CRDS)

Statewide Strategic Planning

Work with the State Director and designated staff to facilitate the development of State Strategic Plan and the annual updates. (CDPD)

Track progress within state of Strategic Plan goals and objectives. (CDPD staff)

Preparation of strategic plan reports (community development reports) for National Office. (CDPD staff)

Use the State Rural Development Council as a vehicle for assisting in data collection and other aspects of the design of the State RD Office Strategic Plan. (CRDS)

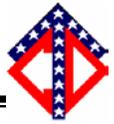
Building Partnerships for Communities and Rural Development

Provide leadership to build partnerships (coalitions) between agencies, organizations, and units of government to increase communications, identify shared goals and priority areas, leverage limited public/private resources and avoid duplication of effort. (CDPD, CRDS)

Where State Rural Development Councils exist, use them to help you connect with other rural institutions to leverage limited resources for improvements of rural conditions, to develop



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solutions to persistent rural problems by coordinating consultation and decision-making among all key institutions with a stake in the problem and its solution, and to publicize your needs and successes to a broad range of partners throughout the Council's state-wide network of rural partners. (CDPD, CRDS)

In States without State Rural Development Councils volunteer to be a leader in forming a new SRDC for your state. (CDPD, CRDS)

Participate actively in the SRDC. This may include becoming a member of the Council, serving on the Council Executive Board, and participating in Council activities. In all cases, this means maintaining regular contact with the State Council, attending Council meetings, and sharing information and good practices. (CDPD, CRDS)

Use the SRDC to assist the State RD Office in using its resources most effectively to improve the quality of life in rural communities; in particular, this includes participation in promoting and participating in multi-agency collaborations. (CDPD, CRDS)

Where no SRDC exists, work proactively with other programs, including federal, state, local, and tribal, and for-profit and non-profit programs and organizations, in promoting and participating in multi-agency collaborations which assist the State RD Office in using its resources most effectively to improve the quality of life in rural communities. (CDPD, CRDS)

Use the SRDC as a vehicle for assisting in data collection and other aspects of the design of the State RD Office Strategic Plan. Work with the State Council as you develop your five-year State Strategic Plan and to use the Council as a resource in carrying out the plan's strategies. (CDPD, CRDS)

Where no SRDC exists, use a multi-agency consortium of programs, including federal, state, local, and tribal, and for-profit and non-profit programs and organizations, as a vehicle for assisting in data collection and other aspects of the design of the State RD Office Strategic Plan. (CDPD, CRDS)

Community Development Information Management

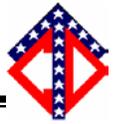
Serve as lead contact for Data Warehouse information (how to use, what it means, how to graphically show work planned and accomplished at the community level) (CRDS)

Maintain an awareness and library (if possible) of all public and private rural development programs offered that could be sought out by community members or local sponsors to further the community development program effort. Regularly share relevant information widely with client groups. Use the Internet as a primary information tool. (CDPD, CRDS)

Maintain excellent communication and relations with all members of the Rural Development Team to include office staff, financial program employees, other USDA partners, State Rural Development Councils, non-USDA partners, etc. Recommend providing each with monthly



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highlights of project activities to keep them informed to maintain understanding and support for Community Development. Provide frequent verbal updates, but written monthly updates to State Director and National Office of Community Development Desk Officers. (CDPD)

Coordinate studies of rural area needs within the state to identify specific/common rural development concerns, needs, or opportunities. (CDPM, CRDS)

Serve as public information specialist at special events to insure proper documentation and recording of the event. Assist supported communities to maintain an historical record of major events. (CRDS)

Professional Activities

Provide leadership to RD Community Development on planning and facility arrangements for community development meetings, tours, and demonstrations held each year. (CRDS)

Provide ongoing RD Community Development orientation training to community members, sponsoring organizations, USDA offices, RD staff, state and federal agencies working with Community Development and other potential partners. (CDPD)

Develop and continuously update training materials to include: fact sheets, brochures, handbooks, visual aids, videos, slide presentations, displays, etc. (CRDS)

Develop and maintain an effective information and education program about the RD Community Development Program and ongoing project activities with sponsors, media, partners, volunteers, technical and financial assistance sources etc. (CDPD statewide, CRDS local level)

Attend statewide and national training conferences to keep abreast of new techniques and methods for implementing effective economic and community development strategies. Keeps abreast of social and economic trends/changes and the implications for needed activities. Advises the State Director on developing issues and how to best address new needs. (CRDS, CDPD)

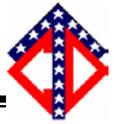
Serving the Community Development Needs of Rural Places Throughout the State

Provide advisory or consultative services when assisting communities and Agency field personnel with approaches and methodologies for strategic planning and project/program implementation. Assistance levels are likely to be provided using any one or combination of three different contact modes:

- Advisory capacity -- The community leads the charge and USDA provides feedback on the process when asked. (CDPM, CRDS)



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- Interactive capacity -- The community is fully in charge of the strategic planning process and USDA specialists provide active consultation and feedback during many stages of the process. (CDPM, CRDS)
- Full Assistance capacity -- USDA Community Resource Development Specialist(s) fully facilitate, but neither controls nor authors the community's strategic planning process. (CDPM, CRDS)

Serve as liaison between rural communities and other Federal agencies and as a rural advocate with critical non-USDA organizations. (CDPD)

Provide technical assistance to communities, and community based organizations for any development of bylaws, articles of incorporation, and 501(c)3 nonprofit status designation that may be required for their citizen-based development, including reviewing application write-ups and consulting on periodic update needs (such as state and federal organization requests for information). (CRDS)

Assist communities with sponsorship of state, regional and national community development meetings to include program planning, facility arrangements, etc. (CDPD, CRDS)

Help communities seek funding from private foundations, corporations, and state and federal government programs for implementing project activities. This may include training on seeking funds and/or other fundraising techniques. Methods:

- Represent supported communities as contact for potential funders; (CRDS local)
- Provide advice and assistance on grant-writing to supported communities as directed; (CRDS)
- Assist/advise communities on grant administration when necessary; (CRDS)
- Insure benchmark budgets are complete and expenditures are for legible purposes; (CRDS)
- Insure completion of required deliverables and reports on time (CDPD)

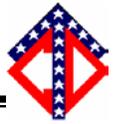
Initiate and nurture relationships with public and private technical and financial assistance sources for potential future funding of and implementation of project activities. Keep them informed of RD Community Development program progress and continually cultivate good working relations. (CDPD statewide, CRDS at local level)

Nurturing Supported Communities

Assist supported communities (Empowerment Zones, Enterprise Communities, Champion Communities, Rural Economic Area Partnership Zones, Rural Community Advancement Program Communities and any other communities specifically-designated and targeted for



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community development technical assistance by State Directors) with their organization and any development of bylaws, articles of incorporation, and 501 (c) 3 nonprofit status designation that may be necessary for their citizen-based development needs -- to include application write-ups and meeting periodic update needs (state and federal revenue office requests for information to keep current). (CRDS)

Assist supported communities to improve recruitment and development of leaders through the creation and periodic updating of citizen participation and leadership development plans. Assist communities in achieving representation reflective of area's population diversity. (CRDS)

Assist supported communities to develop and maintain credibility in the area as viable and effective rural development entities that gets things done. (CRDS)

Create or facilitate opportunities for public input into supported communities' Strategic Plans, Benchmarks, and evaluations to ensure high quality end products reflective of the areas' needs and potential. (CRDS)

Provide staff leadership in planning and coordinating Rural Development Community Development projects adopted by supported communities. (CDPD, CRDS)

Assist supported communities in developing an effective volunteer program that provides individual incentives and recognizes and rewards the efforts of local citizens through such mechanisms as annual awards and public recognition events. (CRDS)

Assist supported communities in developing a sustainable fundraising program to provide annual supplemental funding for community development capacity-building operations and seed dollars for projects. (CRDS)

Advise on the development, amendment, revision, layout, printing and distribution of supported communities' strategic plan, benchmarks, newsletters, and annual report. (CRDS)

Serve as liaison between USDA and supported communities. (CRDS)

Serve as public information specialist at special events when necessary to insure proper documentation and recording of the event. Assist supported communities to maintain an historical record of major events. (CRDS)

Effectively manage the grant-making and grant-servicing aspects of USDA EZ/EC grant program for those communities who have been designated to receive these grants. For those communities that received HHS grants, provide effective liaison to state government on the community's use and disposition of the grant. In all cases coordinate grant use with Benchmark Management System data entry. Insure supported communities meet all federal grant management requirements for these monies. (CDPD, CRDS)

Represent supported communities as a facilitator at local project planning meetings to review progress, evaluate problems or progress, or to further develop new ideas or identify needs (ideas

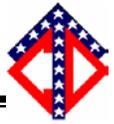


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or needs that depending on feasibility and local support, may or may not ever become future adopted projects). (CRDS)

Encourage and assist supported communities to initiate an effective annual awards program and public recognition event to reward outstanding efforts on behalf of community development by local individuals and groups. (CRDS)



CORE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BEHAVIORS FOR WORKING WITH SUPPORTED COMMUNITIES

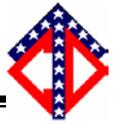
(EMPOWERMENT ZONES, ENTERPRISE COMMUNITIES, CHAMPION COMMUNITIES, REAP ZONES, RCAP COMMUNITIES AND OTHER STATE OFFICE-TARGETED COMMUNITIES)

Each Supported Community is a unique group and working with them demands special skills tailored to meet their particular needs. There are, however, a core group of skills that a Community Resource Development Specialist (whatever your title) should apply in nearly every situation. You should rely on these skills first.

1. Get to know community leaders individually. Work closely with them, visit them often and get to know their interests, goals and reasons for being involved in the Community Development program.
2. Get community members involved along with the State Director or his/her program manager.
3. Rural Development Managers should accompany CD Specialists to several local community meetings. They need to be aware of what is going on so they can help when appropriate.
4. Be aggressive in promoting all community benchmarking measures. They result in real activities, which get local citizens involved.
5. Communicate the needs and desires of the community to all agencies which could possibly provide assistance; include other agencies in community meetings whenever possible.
6. Be a good listener - hear what people are saying. People tend to talk when they have something they want to get off their chest. Hear what they have to say and then decide the merits of their comments. Some things may be very easy to take care of and the amount of good will generated could be fantastic.
7. Respond to community direction -- don't simply react. The community leadership is exercising its duties by making decisions and setting priorities. This is what you should be responding to.
8. Keep the community in the forefront, it's their program. This is one of the few ways to get the local leaders to become involved. They are human -- they like publicity too.
9. Learn your area and start looking for ideas. It is important to know your area. Some ideas may work in one area, but not in others. Make them compatible. Use the Internet as a development tool.



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10. No task is too big or unsolvable. Be positive, it's contagious. There is a way to overcome almost every adversity. Use all resources available to you. Invent new ones.
11. Represent the community, not your agency. Sometimes the community's goal are different than agency priorities. The coordinator's job is facilitating what the community needs.
12. Don't try to be everything to everybody. Assist the community's board in working towards the goal and objectives stated in the strategic plan. This should be the main focus of the coordinator's activity.
13. Work on projects that can be accomplished in one year or less. When a project lasts too long, interest wanes and soon community members lose interest. Break big projects into manageable parts and tackle one part at a time. Publicize and celebrate the completion of these parts.
14. Use outside expertise when the community or coordinator doesn't have it. If things are going to happen and the coordinator doesn't have the expertise, they probably won't get done unless outside help is solicited.
15. Know the likes and dislikes of your community so that you can avoid wasting time on things that will not fly with them.
16. Get training and know creative financing so that you can assist your community in making things happen.
17. Don't be concerned with who gets the credit -- get the job done! Then report the happening through the media and to your National Office Desk Officer. Capitalize on news aspects of community accomplishments.
18. Assist the community leadership in carrying out their roles and responsibilities, but don't get caught in the trap of doing their jobs for them.
19. Encourage presentations by the communities' technical advisors. These persons are an integral part of the program and have a lot to offer. Make use of this valuable resource.
20. Keep local people informed through newsletters. Every locality should have some kind of newsletter to let people know what is going on in the Community Development arena.



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21. Capitalize on pre-existing local grassroots organizations and committees. These groups can be the lifeblood of your efforts. These groups carry out much of what gets done by communities. Don't overlook the creative potential of building new groups when the conditions are right or the situation warrants.
22. Know your legislators and keep them informed. Spend time keeping them up to date on major efforts and invite them to participate in dedications and the annual meetings.
23. Have Annual Meetings. This should be big shindig, a chance to brag to the communities within the area, a chance to get all the important people out, a chance to recognize the hard work done by many individuals. Celebrate success.
24. Make meetings interesting - variety, tours, speakers surprises. This is a way to get people to come out for meetings.
25. Have workshops for training community board members and others so they may be more effective in doing their jobs.
26. Have brochures and a slide show or overhead presentation on the Community Development Program ready to go. This is a good way to tell your story.
27. Have fun with your communities! Share in their fairs, festivals, and social gatherings. Encourage others to attend as well.



Community Development Program — Typical State Office Staffing Structure

Note: this outlines a typical organization of the types and arrangement of positions needed to staff the Community Development Program as recommended by the Office of Community Development and suggested by Management Control Reviews. Community Development staffing allocations may vary from state to state depending on the level of FTE allocations to the state. A minimum staffing allocation in a state with two area offices should be about 6 FTEs.

State Office

- Community Development Program Director (CDPD) (full-time)
- Community Resource Development Specialist(s) (CRDS) (one or more full-time)
- CD Technician and/or Clerical support (full or part-time)

Area Offices

- Rural Development Manager (part-time Community Development responsibilities)
- Community Resource Development Specialist(s) (one or more full or part-time)