

# RURAL COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS



Seeking fund development opportunities in rural communities can come with unique challenges such as small populations, physical distance, and lack of resources. Many organizations find that they've asked all the same people for help year after year, while all the other nonprofits in the areas have done the same.

A few ideas to address these issues are:



Be creative about who can serve on your fund development committee.

- Seek people who have expertise in your program, even if they live in the larger town 50 miles away. It can't hurt to ask.
- Ask people who are former residents, yet still have a connection and care about your community.
- Consider friends or family members of residents. They may have to mostly help remotely, but also may have a vested interest in the community because of loved ones.



Consider going higher up the corporate ladder with sponsorship requests.

- If you have small businesses in town that can't help you as much as they'd like, but are part of a larger entity, you might need to appeal to the Regional Office or higher.
- If you have businesses who distribute goods to others or are part of a supply chain, you could appeal to others along the chain. Making a case that your community is an integral part of their operations can at least give you a logical introduction.



Look at connections to higher education.

- Colleges and universities are interested in entire regions, yet sometimes forget the areas where fewer people reside.
- Make your community and program noticeable, so you can build connections for funding, but also attract or recruit future staff.



### Specialized Foundations

Research foundations or grants that are VERY specialized. Think of all the ways your community is unique and try to capitalize on them.

- Are there funding sources just for agricultural communities?
- Are there foundations that specifically designate dollars for communities surrounding military bases?
- Do some grants exist just for areas with high percentages of non-English speakers?



### Reach Out to Representation

Don't forget your political representatives.

- Your State and US congressional representatives are elected to listen to your specific community. Keep them aware of your needs and the struggles of finding support.



### Utilize Technology

Because you'll be communicating a lot remotely, you'll need to tap into creative technology as much as possible.

You may also consider online fundraising that can happen from anywhere as a great remedy to geographical isolation. See [www.networkforgood.org](http://www.networkforgood.org), [www.grantstation.com](http://www.grantstation.com) for ideas.