



2022-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

David Marshall, Sierra County



RURAL COUNTY
REPRESENTATIVES OF
CALIFORNIA

John Vallejo, Inyo County

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The 2022-2023 RCRC Strategic Plan serves as a pivotal document for our organization, setting the priorities by which our Board of Directors dedicate time and resources for the benefit of California's rural communities. In this second year of implementation, the Strategic Plan builds upon our progress in expanding broadband access and increasing forest resiliency and wildfire protection while also advancing new strategies targeting the provision of small county grant assistance and establishing electric vehicle infrastructure readiness. In all these endeavors, RCRC's shared strategic focus aims to enhance and protect the quality of life in our rural counties.

Doug Teeter

RCRC 2023 Board Chair
Butte County Supervisor

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

FORGING A PATH FOR RURAL COUNTIES



Jay Coberly, Inyo County



1215 K Street, Suite 1650
Sacramento, CA, 95814

Phone: 916-447-4806

E-mail: info@rccrcnet.org
www.rccrcnet.org

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ABOUT US

40 COUNTIES STRONG

The Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) is a forty-member county service organization that champions policies on behalf of California's rural counties. Working with its membership, RCRC advocates on behalf of rural issues at the state and federal levels.

RCRC provides the rural county perspective on a myriad of issues during the legislative and regulatory process, including land use, water and natural resources, housing, transportation, wildfire protection policies, and health and human services. The purpose of RCRC's work is to improve the ability of small, rural California county government to provide services by reducing the burden of state and federal mandates, and promoting a greater understanding among policymakers about the unique challenges that face California's small-population counties.



Peggy Sells, Tuolumne County

RCRC AFFILIATED ENTITIES:

Over the years, RCRC has also expanded its role as an innovative service provider through the establishment of several affiliated entities. Through these entities RCRC develops and implements services to address important challenges facing communities across California including attaining homeownership, implementing environmental and regulatory requirements, and accessing reliable and affordable high speed broadband.



Rural Counties
Environmental Services
Joint Powers Authority
ESJPA



GOLDEN STATE
Finance Authority®



GOLDEN STATE
NATURAL RESOURCES



golden state
connect
authority

Rural Alliance, Inc.

STRATEGIC PLAN

DEVELOPMENT

Establishing a Strategic Direction

During 2021, RCRC embarked on a process for developing the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan. Engaging with RCRC representatives and rural county stakeholders, the RCRC Board of Directors identified key areas of interest to rural counties and formulated a plan for prioritizing and tackling these challenges as an organization. The plan is to serve as a guiding document from which the RCRC Board of Directors will set policies and priorities.

3 PHASE PROCESS



Engagement

RCRC conducted an extensive engagement effort gathering input on areas of interest for the RCRC Board to consider including in the strategic plan. The engagement effort included in-person or virtual meetings with the RCRC Executive Committee, Board of Directors, past Chairs, all staff, individual member counties, legislative staff, and the small and rural county representatives of partner entities. RCRC also refined and affirmed the mission and vision for the organization.



Plan Development

Information gathered during the engagement efforts guided the formation of the strategic plan. RCRC reviewed the input received on key interests and prioritized strategies in alignment with the mission and vision of the organization.

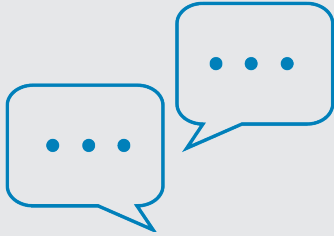


Approval Phase

The RCRC Board of Directors reviewed and refined the draft plan, ensuring the inclusion and prioritization of key areas of interest, before finalizing and approving the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan in December 2021.



KEY AREAS OF INTEREST FOR RURAL COUNTIES



✓ Wildfire Prevention and Forest Resiliency

With catastrophic wildfire increasing in size and intensity annually, rural counties saw wildfire prevention and forest resiliency as a top priority for the protection and preservation of rural communities. To aid in the success of these efforts, representatives emphasized a need to continue enhancing partnerships with land management agencies.

✓ Drought and Water Resiliency

Long periods of drought are having significant impact on rural communities, threatening water supply to the general public and to agricultural operations. Many counties expressed the need to mitigate drought impacts on their communities while also preparing for the onset of potential floods, particularly in areas recently burned by wildfires.

✓ Broadband

The State of California established a landmark \$6 billion investment in broadband infrastructure in 2021, representing a significant step in bridging the digital divide. Access to broadband remains uneven across the state, especially in rural counties where 51.3% of households have no access to high-speed broadband. Seizing the opportunities provided for in the recent State investment is of high importance for establishing equitable access to broadband in rural counties.

✓ Housing and Health Services

Rural communities face unique challenges in housing and health services due to their size and topographic location. Stakeholders pointed to limited staffing and resources as large barriers to housing development projects and the provision of important health services. Some rural counties are faced with limited providers for substance abuse and behavioral health treatment resources for residents in need.

✓ Rural County Voice

Legislation at the state and federal level can have substantially different impacts in rural communities than in urban areas due to greater distances, lower population densities, and geographic diversity. Rural county representatives reaffirmed the need to promote a greater understanding among policy makers about the unique challenges that face California's small-population counties.

ESTABLISHING A GUIDING DOCUMENT FOR THE ORGANIZATION

Jeff Hart, Sonoma County



FRAMEWORK

TERMINOLOGY AND STRUCTURE

The terminology and structure utilized for the RCRC Strategic Plan consists of goals, objectives, and strategies. This framework provides actionable steps aligned to the overall aim of the organization and includes metrics to measure progress.

Goals: Broad outcomes that the organization aims to achieve

Goal

Objectives: Measurable approaches taken to achieve a goal [Includes a performance metric]

Objective

Strategies: Specific approaches taken to achieve an objective

Strategy

Strategy

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

OVER THE NEXT 3 YEARS, WE ARE AIMING FOR...



Equitable Access

Advancing greater access to essential services through innovation, advocacy, and partnership



Impactful Advocacy

Recognition as the premier organization on issues affecting rural counties



Healthy Communities

Stewarding the health, protection and economic growth of rural counties



Operational Excellence

Ensuring the continued growth of organizational operations and the provision of quality services to member counties

2022-2025 RCRC STRATEGIC PLAN

EQUITABLE ACCESS

OBJECTIVES

METRICS

STRATEGIES

BROADBAND:

Increase access and affordability of high-speed broadband for all rural Californians

and % of addresses served in member counties
of companies providing service in member counties
increase in speed offerings in member counties
of underserved with access to only 1 provider in member counties
\$ grant funding and financing obtained for broadband deployment in member counties

- Provide broadband information-sharing and capacity-building resources to rural counties beginning January 2022. *
- Ensure inclusion of rural California in development of NTIA required State Broadband Plan and Digital Equity Plan beginning January 2023.
- Ensure all member counties have broadband strategic plans by November 2023.
- Implement open-access municipal broadband demonstration projects by December 2024.

HOUSING:

Increase homeownership opportunities for rural Californians through the provision and promotion of affordable housing programs

of families or individuals assisted with a home purchase in member counties
\$ in down payment assistance provided to families or individuals in member counties
\$ in single-family loan financing provided in member counties

- Utilize established networks at the state level to expand GSFA resources beginning January 2022.
- Research and identify strategies and partnerships beginning March 2022 to assist member counties seeking to facilitate affordable and workforce housing development.
- Leverage partnerships to expand information sharing in member counties regarding GSFA homebuyer programs beginning March 2022. *
- Implement marketing and outreach campaign through December 2023 to expand minority homeownership.

HEALTH SERVICES:

Increase access to healthcare services in rural California

of webinar and informational sessions held on county mandates in health services or behavioral health
of established partnerships
of collaborative efforts implemented to increase access to healthcare services

- Partner with organizations and service providers to enhance health access and behavioral health services in underserved rural areas, including outreach efforts to identify unmet needs in rural healthcare services, beginning January 2022.
- Advocate for the permanent continuation of telehealth flexibilities utilized in the COVID-19 pandemic and identify any additional post-pandemic health needs for rural counties beginning January 2022. *
- Support efforts to establish workforce development programs that help rural counties recruit and retain qualified healthcare workers beginning January 2022.
- Provide resources and educational opportunities for rural county supervisors and staff to enhance their knowledge of statutory requirements, funding opportunities, and the regulatory landscape around behavioral health, CARE court, continuum of care and CalAIM implementation beginning June 2022.



IMPACTFUL ADVOCACY

OBJECTIVES

METRICS

STRATEGIES

STATE AND FEDERAL ADVOCACY:

Increase organizational visibility and network of relationships with policymakers

Completion of networking inventory

- Identify and leverage Board Delegate networks and relationships with both legislators and government administration beginning January 2022.
- Further expand partnerships with organizations outside of local government beginning January 2022.
- Develop and circulate legislative digest at year's end beginning January 2022.*
- Utilize "ad hoc" committees on priority policy areas beginning January 2022.*
- Continue periodic governmental affairs update calls for Supervisors and/or senior county staff from January 2023 thru September 2023, then evaluate.

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES:

Increase understanding among legislature and regulatory agencies of unique interests of rural communities

*Identification of initial research study
Completion of pilot educational tour*

- Conduct and fund research informing policy makers of the needs and challenges faced by rural communities beginning January 2022.
- Expand participation in legal advocacy matters of statewide significance to rural counties starting July 2022.
- Conduct educational tours beginning January 2023.

REGULATORY ENGAGEMENT:

Prioritize significant regulatory advocacy needs in rural counties

Completion of regulatory needs identification

- Evaluate resources to expand California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) advocacy beginning January 2022.*
- Integrate legislative and regulatory policy work to create seamless advocacy beginning January 2022.*
- Prioritize policy areas that most affect member counties beginning January 2023.*

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

OBJECTIVES

FOREST RESILIENCY AND WILDFIRE:

Increase forest resiliency and wildfire prevention

WATER RESILIENCY:

Mitigate drought impacts on rural counties

INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Advance economic development and infrastructure investment in rural California

METRICS

\$ long-term sustainable funding secured

Completion of GSNR financial close

Initiation of GSNR operations

and % of member counties with established drought plans

and % of member counties with identified infrastructure priorities

of identified infrastructure projects provided technical assistance, submitted for funding, or awarded funding

STRATEGIES

Advocacy

- Gather input from the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Wildfire and Forest Stewardship to inform the RCRC Policy Principles, wildfire and forest management taskforce, and Strategic Plan by September 2022. *
- Target advocacy efforts beginning January 2022 to pursue long-term funding for the following initiatives:
 - › Forest Stewardship
 - › Wildfire Response
 - › Community Resiliency
 - › Regulatory Streamlining
 - › Infrastructure
 - › Upper Watershed Management
 - › Implementation of Federal Policy Objectives
 - › Wildfire Recovery & Reforestation
 - › Workforce Development
 - › Utility Wildfire Mitigation
 - › Sustainable Recreational Economy

Forest Stewardship

- Explore opportunities for enhanced partnership with land management agencies on forest stewardship and the provision of assistance for private landowners by June 2022. *
- Leverage and activate RCRC held USDA Forest Service Master Stewardship Agreements.
- Operationalize Golden State Natural Resources (GSNR) forest management activities by December 2024.

- Leverage state and federal programs starting January 2022, including new infrastructure programs, to help rural counties mitigate flood and drought impacts and maximize flood flows for groundwater recharge.
- Conduct coordinated effort among member counties to develop state required county drought plans by December 2022. *

- Assist member counties in implementing identified key priorities, including connecting counties to technical resources, beginning March 2022.
- Identify and compile a database of plans, priorities, and key Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy components for member counties by December 2022. *
- Determine unique opportunities for infrastructure planning and project funding in member counties by December 2022. *
- Develop a focused initiative to assist small/low population member counties with obtaining discretionary state, federal, and grant funds by April 2023.
- Prepare member counties for deployment of Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) infrastructure. Efforts focused in key areas:
 - › Adoption of ZEV Infrastructure Ordinance by March 2023.
 - › Identification of funding for development of ZEV Readiness Plans by September 2023.
 - › Identification of funding and/or partners for ZEV infrastructure deployment by December 2023.
- Ensure all member counties have Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) plans in place by December 2024.



OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

OBJECTIVES

METRICS

STRATEGIES

CORPORATE ADMINISTRATION:

Maintain and strengthen organizational governance

% of Corporate Governance Framework completed

- Formalize and compile a complete entity-wide Corporate Governance Framework to set forth policies and procedures of RCRC and affiliated entities over Administration, Operations, Finance, Human Resources, and Technology by June 2023.

FISCAL HEALTH:

Maintain and strengthen organizational fiscal health

% change in net position
% gross revenue from forecasted results
Completed timely fiscal reporting and quarterly Executive Committee presentations
Completed monthly monitoring of organizational fiscal performance

- Modernize and compile policies and procedures over financial accounting and reporting to support sound financial management, risk mitigation, and alignment of financial operations with the overall mission of the entities by December 2022. *
- Develop a five-year revenue and expense forecast in conjunction with the organizational reserve policy by March 2022. *
- Evaluate technological solutions (software and services) to enhance business financial reporting for informed decision-making by December 2023. *
- Broaden organizational programs to diversify revenue including those with a focus on opportunities that serve county member needs through December 2024.
- Further incorporate financial accounting in informed decision-making including the impact of project and operational initiatives to the greater organization – ongoing.

TECHNOLOGY:

Enhance security and advance operational effectiveness

Security Penetration Testing Score
% of applicable security regulations of which the organization is in compliance
Microsoft Security Score

- Utilize an internal committee to explore GIS capabilities for the organization and form recommendations by March 2022. *
- Conduct an assessment and develop recommendations to address potential security risks in the IT environment and associated operations by June 2022. (additional security strategies to be determined following assessment) *
- Explore contract solution for addressing help desk requests by September 2022. *
- Migrate all files to the Azure and Microsoft 365 platform by June 2023.
- Evaluate technology process improvements to enhance operational and financial efficiency by December 2023.
- Adopt Cybersecurity framework and begin implementing associated compliance and adherence strategies by December 2023.
- Achieve more comprehensive Microsoft 365 integration throughout the organization by December 2024.

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

OBJECTIVES

METRICS

STRATEGIES

HUMAN RESOURCES:

Cultivate a skilled, engaged, and sustainable workforce

Employee Engagement Survey Score

Employee Engagement Percentile Rank

- Respond to Human Resources Consultant Review priority items by June 2022, such as employee exempt/non-exempt classifications and updated employee job descriptions, roles, and responsibilities. *
- Evaluate employee engagement utilizing a validated method by December 2022. *
- Conduct a succession planning assessment, specifically for key roles impacting business operations, with mitigation recommendations by March 2023.
- Formalize uniform career development plans and training opportunities across the organization by June 2023.
- Evaluate human resources organizational structure and practices by June 2023.
- Develop and implement employee engagement action plan in accordance with employee survey results by December 2024.

MEMBER SERVICES:

Increase and enhance member services

% of member county representatives surveyed that were satisfied or very satisfied with membership services

\$ grant funding acquired on behalf of member counties

- Identify and strengthen Board development opportunities, including mentorship and networking services and an evaluation of practices associated with high performing boards by June 2022. *
- Evaluate feasibility of administering county specific debt issuance by December 2023.
- Identify issue liaisons among RCRC staff for member counties to directly communicate regarding their interests and concerns by September 2023.
- Develop ESJPA business plan to identify opportunities for economies of scale among member counties to address service delivery or regulatory compliance needs by June 2023. *

COMMUNICATIONS:

Increase organizational communication to membership and enhance recognition of rural county interests at the state and national level

% of member county representatives surveyed that felt informed by RCRC regarding legislative matters, the work of the organization and its affiliated entities, and available resources.

media mentions (year to date)

of content followers and subscribers for social media, newsletter, and website.

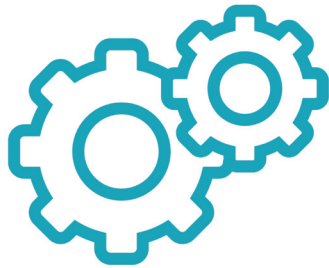
- Unify organizational communication of RCRC and its affiliated entities by January 2022. *
- Increase content distribution and communications outreach by June 2022. *
- Evaluate and enhance current communication methods by June 2022. *
- Implement internal communications plan by June 2023.
- Compile a Comprehensive Organizational Policy and Procedures Manual by June 2023.
- Review and redesign RCRC and affiliate entity websites as necessary by August 2023.
- Conduct presentations on the RCRC strategic plan to all interested member counties by June 2024.

IMPLEMENTATION

IN ACTION

The RCRC Board of Directors approved the 2022-2025 RCRC Strategic Plan for implementation beginning January 2022. Over the three year plan, RCRC staff will work with the Board, our rural counties, policymakers and stakeholders in advancement of the strategic plan. Viewed as a living document, the plan will continuously be reviewed and monitored to ensure it remains a valuable resource for the organization.

Tracking Progress



To ensure active implementation of the strategic plan, each objective has an assigned on staff subject matter expert to serve as the lead and driving force for implementation. The leads work with the RCRC Communications Director to monitor progress on a quarterly basis.

Communication



It is the intention of RCRC that the strategic plan be communicated with our members and partners. In doing so, RCRC hopes to increase awareness and understanding of its vision and to garner support in its advancement.

Information regarding the strategic plan is available on RCRC's website and by contacting the RCRC Communications Director.

Reporting and Evaluations



The strategic plan is a flexible document. For that reason, plan progress will be reviewed annually with the Board of Directors at the beginning of each calendar year with the potential to make alterations at that time. Periodic check-ins on specific strategies will also occur with the Board throughout the year.

Data for the strategic plan metrics will be gathered regularly throughout the course of the three-year plan and shared with the Board as part of the annual review process.



John Hollis, Plumas County

RURAL COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES OF CALIFORNIA



1215 K Street, Suite 1650
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 477-4806
www.rcrcnet.org
Email: info@rcrcnet.org