



Strategic Plan 2018-2020

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RDI 2018–2020 RDI Mission & Visionary Goals

RDI strengthens rural people, places, and economies in the Pacific Northwest.



Goal 1: Develop Networks of Rural Leaders: RDI’s work ensures there is a critical mass of rural leaders in the Pacific Northwest who are diverse, inclusive, highly skilled, and well connected. Rural people take lead on issues, projects, and with organizations whose impacts mean the most to them.

Goal 2: Revitalize Rural Economies: RDI supports residents of rural communities who are actively working to improve the economic well-being of their communities by strengthening local businesses, fostering productive economic development ecosystems, enhancing local markets, and attracting investment.

Goal 3: Elevate Rural Voices and Priorities: RDI demands that rural priorities and interests, shaped by a diversity of rural people, are at the forefront of statewide and regional discussions and decisions. Rural leaders, voices, and issues are equitably represented in public discourse and decision-making.

Goal 4: Stand as a Rural Resource: RDI stands as the premier rural organization in the Pacific Northwest by being unapologetically dedicated to our rural mission and building the strength and resiliency of our organization to serve and advance rural priorities.

Goal 1: Develop Networks of Rural Leaders

RDI's work ensures there is a critical mass of rural leaders in the Pacific Northwest who are diverse, inclusive, highly skilled, and well connected. Rural people take lead on issues, projects, and with organizations whose impacts mean the most to them.

Metrics

We will measure our success by:

- Number, geographic reach, and diversity of new leaders who graduate from RDI's leadership programs
- The number of rural community leaders taking on new leadership roles
- Positive community change reported because of rural leadership trainings

Strategies

1. Expand and Diversify the Network of Rural Community Leaders

- a. Continue to deliver innovative trainings that build the number and capacity of rural community leaders.
 - Adapt leadership development curriculum and delivery systems to incorporate new skills, best practices, and a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens.
 - Engage community volunteers in the program through the establishment of a Community Ambassador Network.
 - Incorporate resources and partners throughout delivery and in the project phase.
- b. Collaborate with culturally specific organizations to design and deliver leadership to specific audiences with an emphasis on Latinos, Native Americans, and youth.
- c. Expand geographic reach in Washington, Idaho, and other Pacific Northwest locations and communities.

Approaches: Rural Community Leadership Program, Community Ambassador Network

2. Deliver Advanced Skills Trainings to Rural Leaders

- a. Continue to design new leadership development modules and deliver regional events throughout the Pacific Northwest (Systems; Collaboration; Economic Development; Advocacy; Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion; Formal Governance).
- b. Develop a Stage 2 leadership program, in partnership with other organizations, for existing leaders and community hubs that have completed Rural Community Leadership.
- c. Build the capacity of rural organizations and groups to successfully attract and leverage multiple sources of funding.
- d. Customize facilitations and trainings to meet rural community demands.

Approaches: Rural Skill Builders, Learn By Doing, Rural Leader's Toolbox, Leadership 301

3. Strengthen the Interconnectedness of Rural Leaders

- a. Provide opportunities to participants and volunteers for networking, peer learning, and advanced skill development.
- b. Spur online interaction and networks via information sharing and stories.

Approaches: Regards to Rural, Conference of Communities, RDI Social Media, Rural Skill Builders, Annual Report

Goal 2: Revitalize Rural Economies

RDI supports residents of rural communities who are actively working to improve the economic well-being of their communities by strengthening local businesses, fostering productive economic development ecosystems, enhancing local markets, and attracting investment.

Metrics

We will measure our success by:

- The number of rural businesses started, expanded, and retained, and jobs created
- Number of community economic development projects completed by rural community leaders and the number of leaders involved
- The number of partners and agencies involved in, or investing in, building rural economies

Strategies:

1. Encourage Rural Small Business and Entrepreneurial Success

- a. Work with communities to identify the specific needs and opportunities of their local business community in order to retain and expand rural main street businesses.
- b. Work with a network of partners to create supportive small business and entrepreneurial ecosystems to benefit local rural business development, with an emphasis on minorities and other economically marginalized people.
- c. Provide rural minorities and youth the training, tools, coaching, and connection to resources needed for the development of small, locally owned enterprises.

Approaches: Business Retention & Expansion, Pasos al Éxito, Entrepreneurial Toolbox

2. Catalyze Locally Driven Economic Revitalization

- a. Custom design, deliver and coordinate community-driven efforts that result in defined economic development priorities and local residents who are motivated to be involved in the economic revitalization of their communities.
- b. Facilitate and support the development and effectiveness of rural action teams. Provide them with support, motivation, skills, tools, resources, and innovative approaches to work together to build community and economic vitality.
- c. Identify and maximize existing local assets to strengthen the economic impact as rural communities attract and welcome increased numbers of visitors and potential businesses.

Approaches: Economic Vitality (EV) Roadmaps, Rural Action Toolbox, First Impressions, Downtown Development, EV Summits

3. Advance Systems-Change Approaches to Rural Economic Development

- a. Promote investment in rural economic development by influencing statewide business plans to more strongly represent rural business interests and support partners and agencies.

- b. Provide and promote alternative models to traditional traded-sector development—ones that increase local ownership and control, focus on economically marginalized people, resist extractive relationships, and build multiple forms of wealth.
 - c. Work with community teams to co-design customized, inclusive, and community-led processes that result in catalytic and impactful visions for their futures, the establishment of actionable priorities, and structures for implementation support.
 - d. Expand RDI’s Economic Vitality services across the Pacific Northwest with a special emphasis on building relationships, partnerships, and services in Washington State.
- Approaches: WealthWorks Northwest, Community Visioning and Strategic Planning, Geographic Expansion, Rural Advocacy and Awareness, Partnership Development

Goal 3: Elevate Rural Voices and Priorities

RDI demands that rural priorities and interests, shaped by a diversity of rural people, are at the forefront of statewide and regional discussions and decisions. Rural leaders, voices, and issues are equitably represented in public discourse and decision-making.

Metrics

We will measure our success by:

- The number of rural leaders engaging within policy development, advocacy, and implementation in Oregon and Washington
- The amount of legislation proposed and passed that aligns with RDI’s defined set of rural priorities
- Collaborative partnerships, activities, and efforts that bridge rural and urban interests

Strategies:

1. Strengthen and Amplify Rural Voices

- a. Leverage RDI’s resources, networks, and organizational voice to advance rural vitality.
 - Launch RDI’s rural advocacy-related efforts at Regards to Rural 2018 with initial focus on Oregon and Washington.
 - Prioritize collaborative partnerships with existing efforts to complement and enhance all of our work: Oregon Business Council, Washington State Department of Commerce, Coastal Caucus, Association of Oregon Counties, Oregon Rural Development Council, Partners for Rural Washington, Washington State Associate of Counties, The Ford Family Foundation, Philanthropy Northwest, city associations, and other organizations that work to advance rural.
- b. Heighten the capacity of the network of rural leaders to advocate on behalf of their interests.
 - Connect rural people with data and knowledge to make informed decisions and coach them in applying research results in decision-making and community action.

- Deliver trainings that give rural leaders the tools, information, and connections to effectively advocate on their own behalf.
- Promote the inclusion of local rural leaders at decision-making tables.

Approaches: Regards to Rural, Rural Oregon Day, Leadership 301, Rural Skill Builders

2. Elevate Rural Priorities and Issues

a. Increase Connection to Policy Makers.

- Within Oregon, seek to leverage our existing and emerging partnerships to enhance policy processes and decisions.
- Within Washington State, seek to connect with leaders, organizations, and issues of importance.
- Coordinate linkages from rural leaders and rural businesses to people of influence and policy makers.
- Convene and engage rural and urban audiences to determine solutions to shared challenges and design policies that serve rural better.

b. Advance and Promote Rural Priorities.

- Educate and inform urban audiences on established rural issues and priorities.
- Coordinate our work to coincide with legislative cycles with the expectation that this strategic priority carries RDI through the spring of 2019 (long session in Washington and Oregon).
- Where and when appropriate, convene partners to advance policy issues and discussions.
- Establish criteria and process to identify issue(s) for RDI to advance and invest resources.

Approaches: Regards to Rural, Rural Oregon Day, Policy Services, Public Speaking

3. Build Bridges Between Rural and Urban

a. Promote Economic Interdependence.

- Actively engage with urban partners to identify needs and promote the advancement of economic opportunity for rural communities.
- Promote channels of communication and stronger linkages between urban markets and rural business sectors.
- Accumulate, distribute, and promote research, testimonies, and case studies that demonstrate that rural economies are vital for overall economic vitality.

b. Connect Urban People to Rural Interests and Solutions.

- Build and enhance relationships with urban leaders and organizations that have mutually beneficial interests from thriving rural communities.
- Coordinate activities that bring rural and urban interests together to shape shared solutions.

Approaches: Regards to Rural, Rural Campaigns, Partner Development, Policy Services

Goal 4: Stand as a Rural Resource

RDI stands as the premier rural organization in the Pacific Northwest by being unapologetically dedicated to our rural mission and building the strength and resiliency of our organization to serve and advance rural priorities.

Metrics

We will measure our success by:

- The number of success stories and the effectiveness of the communication vehicles
- The amount of annual revenue generated in comparison to budget
- Measurements of staff satisfaction and length of employment at RDI

Strategies:

1. Continuously Share the Impact of our Work

a. Program Evaluation

- RDI has an annual evaluation plan that is adjusted as new initiatives emerge or are modified, utilizing internal and external data collection and reporting on program impacts, delivery, and participation.
- Programs are based on theories of change and are designed using graphic logic models that show how RDI activities are linked with expected outcomes.
- Program budgets will include sufficient financial resources to conduct evaluation.
- RDI employs a developmental evaluation approach for assessing innovative programs that are targeted at systems change.

b. Outreach and Communication

- Develop consistent messaging for all programs and services utilizing the web, social media, newsletters, email, and presentations.
- Provide every staff and board member the tools and knowledge needed to effectively promote RDI's values and programs.
- Collect and promote RDI's success stories to advance awareness of RDI's brand, as well as awareness around rural issues.

Approaches: Evaluation Plan, Annual Report, Promotional Campaigns, RDI Marketing

2. Develop a Resilient Financial Position

a. Responsibly Steward our Financial Resources

- Continue to build financial processes that help RDI more easily manage the volume and complexity of our fiscal responsibilities.
- By the 2018 budget cycle, put forth an annual budget that balances expenses with revenue, and by 2019 begin to show profits that again add to our unrestricted net assets.
- Program Financial Management: Support all staff in developing the capacity to identify cost savings that help balance the budget while maintaining excellence in program delivery.

b. Diversify our Funding and Revenue Generation

- Continue to build the number of lasting relationships with foundations, state and federal government, and other sources of funding.
- Cultivate and steward large donors and corporate partnerships.
- Promote individual donations.
- Increase fee for service revenue (small contracts, campaigns).
- Explore the feasibility of innovative methods for revenue generation.

Approaches: Finance Committee, Budgeting, One RDI, Fund Development, Donor Campaigns, Program Development, Admin Team

3. Strive for Excellence in the Workplace

a. Grow the Talents and Professionalism of RDI Staff

- Expand geographic reach and expertise of RDI staff across the Pacific Northwest.
- Provide professional development opportunities to build the skills needed for excellence across all RDI services and operations.
- Strengthen our collective capacity to work together, across staff, board, and partnerships, towards achieving RDI's mission.

b. Develop Innovative and Efficient Systems and Processes

- Transition to a more responsive and effective database.
- Improve document storage and retrieval of information.
- Continually strive for excellence in virtual, responsive program development.

c. Implement Action Plans that Promote RDI's Values

- Implement and update RDI's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan (available upon request).
- Create an environmental sustainability action plan to integrate sustainability practices across all programs and organizational processes.
- Develop and implement employee wellness goals and strategies.

Approaches: Staff Development, One RDI, Board and Staff meetings, IDEA Team, RDI Working Teams (Admin, Operations, and Support Teams, Board Committees)