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Louisiana Governor's Advisory Council on Rural Revitalization

Strategic Planning Toolkit

April 2020

Introduction

Document Purpose & Audience

This Strategic Planning Toolkit is for the Louisiana Governor's Advisory Council on Rural Revitalization, established by Executive Order JBE 2020-3. The Toolkit was created to guide the Council in developing a strategic plan that advises the Governor on issues related to rural revitalization and how the state should address them.

This toolkit provides the Council:
- A roadmap for how it should develop a plan to revitalize rural Louisiana,
- Guidance on Council operations,
- Approaches to identify challenges and develop recommendations,
- An outline of the strategic plan, and
- Key stakeholders to engage when gathering buy-in for the strategic plan.

How to Read This Document

This document is organized by the five phases of the Council Strategic Planning Roadmap and can be read with the Council Strategic Planning Roadmap One-Pager, which accompanies this Toolkit. Each section lists proposed activities the Council should engage in during the associated phase of work and toolkit resources to guide the Council in completing those activities. These recommendations were developed based on Deloitte's leading practices and deep subject matter experience in strategic planning, state and local government, and rural development.

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Council Strategic Planning Roadmap

MONTH 1	MONTH 2	MONTH 3	MONTH 4	MONTH 5	MONTH 6	MONTH 7	MONTH 8

Timelines assume a start date of May 2020 and deadline of January 5, 2021 but can be modified as necessary.

PHASE 1

PHASE 2

PHASE 3

PHASE 4

Standing Up the Council

- Conduct kick-off meeting and visioning exercise with Subcommittee Chairs (Meeting #1)
- Conduct kick-off meeting with full Council and structure Subcommittees (Meeting #2)
- Align on Council vision, scope, and operations
- Allocate staff resources to develop the strategic plan and establish the program management office (PMO) to track Council progress, manage risk, and facilitate meetings throughout the effort
- Develop project plan with timelines, deadlines, and meeting dates to meet the Governor's deadline

Identifying Challenges

- Conduct research (e.g., state agency data, other state commissions, academic desk research) on Subcommittee topics to get baseline, data-driven understanding
- Conduct outreach to rural communities, including issuing surveys or facilitating interviews with parish leaders, state-level legislators, and community members to assess priority challenges
- Conduct focus groups or individual interviews with relevant State agencies, businesses, nonprofits, and academic institutions to understand and incorporate stakeholder perspectives
- Synthesize insights and identify interdependencies across the challenges to support Phase 3

Developing Recommendations

- Develop goals and objectives that address identified challenges with key performance indicators to track progress of the strategic plan
- Research and identify relevant leading practices / case studies from other states or communities
- Identify available federal, state, or private resources to support implementation
- Identify actionable initiatives with estimated timelines, owners, and costs for implementation
- Establish evaluation criteria and test recommended initiatives against standardized criteria
- Prioritize list of recommendations based on criteria
- Design implementation plans for each recommended initiative

Writing the Plan

- Compile information, drafted sections, and stakeholder feedback from Phases 2 and 3 to write the first draft for Subcommittee Chair review
- Complete a series of drafts for review by the full Council, Governor's Office, and key stakeholders
- Revise the plan with edits for full Council review and Council Chairman sign-off
- Deliver final plan to the Governor
- Support the Governor's Office as needed in developing communications campaign for plan distribution

ONGOING

Gathering Buy-In

- Proactively gather feedback from key stakeholders across the state when identifying challenges (Phase 2)
- Solicit feedback from potential strategic plan recommended initiative owners/implementers once initiatives have been brainstormed to encourage buy-in and ensure the recommendations will be implemented (Phase 3)
- Engage relevant stakeholders in bi-monthly meetings throughout all phases to include their perspectives and gather buy-in for the Governor's effort
- Explore the stand-up of an Office of Rural Revitalization to serve as the main coordinating function for stakeholders and plan recommendations, considering the office's mission, organizational structure, and budgetary and staffing requirements

Phase 1: Standing Up the Council

Considerations for the Council when organizing the effort and aligning on how it will operate

Standing Up the Council | Toolkit

For the Council to successfully implement its vision and execute the Governor's Executive Order, the Council must consider a number of facets to establish credibility, scope the effort, and align on an effective operating structure.

ROADMAP ACTIVITIES

☐ Conduct kick-off meeting and visioning exercise with Subcommittee Chairs (Meeting #1)

☐ Conduct kick-off meeting with full Council and structure Subcommittees (Meeting #2)

☐ Align on Council vision, scope, and operations

☐ Allocate staff resources to develop the strategic plan and establish the program management office (PMO) to track Council progress, manage risk, and facilitate meetings throughout the effort

☐ Develop project plan with timelines, deadlines, and meeting dates to meet the Governor's deadline

TOOLKIT RESOURCES

Council Operations
(Page 7)
Outlines operating procedures to guide the Council's efforts

Factors for Success in Strategic Planning
(Page 8)
Provides a checklist of elements to keep top of mind when thinking about the strategic planning process

Meeting #1: Subcommittee Chair Meeting Overview
(Page 9)
Highlights the purpose and topics for discussion in the recommended initial Subcommittee Chair meeting

Meeting #2: Full Council Meeting Overview
(Page 10)
Spotlights the purpose and topics for discussion in the recommended first full Council meeting

Establishing a Strong Program Management Office
(Page 11)
Outlines the key activities the Council's program management office should perform

Council Operations

The Council should follow the recommended operating model to enable a methodological, structured approach to developing the plan.

ORGANIZING THE COUNCIL — WRITING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

RECOMMENDATIONS

MEETING CADENCE	COUNCIL ROLES & DECISION MAKING RIGHTS	FEEDBACK MECHANISMS	RESEARCH STANDARDS	RESOURCE NEEDS
How often will Subcommittee chairs meet? How often will the full Council meet?	*Who will be responsible for making decisions for the strategic plan?*	*How will the Council receive feedback from relevant stakeholders? Who are key stakeholders to engage?*	*What will the standards be for research and recommendations included in the plan?*	*Who will be responsible for writing the plan? Who is the PMO that will manage the execution and risk elevation for each Subcommittee?*
The Council should align on a consistent meeting schedule, held in different geographic locations, to set expectations for Council members' involvement and ensure progress, such as: ▪ **Monthly Council Meetings:** Forum for feedback on progress and drafts across Subcommittees ▪ **Biweekly Subcommittee Chair Meetings**: Opportunity to raise risks and points of integration	The Council should agree to a governance structure with clear decision-making rights to clarify individual and collective roles, such as: ▪ **Council Chairman or Governor's Office Representative**: Final decision on plan content ▪ **Subcommittee Chairs**: Lead development of topic-specific recommendations ▪ **Council Members**: Provide input into each section at monthly Council meetings	The Council should use surveys, focus groups, and interviews to gather feedback from key stakeholders, such as: ▪ **Rural Citizens**: Engage rural constituents to identify challenges ▪ **Subject Matter Experts**: Engage external advisors, nonprofits, and think tanks at each phase of work ▪ **State Agencies / Legislators:** Engage plan implementers to gain buy-in for solutions	The Council should align on an evidence-based approach with consistent data and input standards to inform recommendations, such as: ▪ **Parish-level rural data** sources (as available) allow for more easily comparable metrics for economic and population data ▪ **Continuous input from subject matter experts** at each phase allows context and additional sources to be brought in	The Council should allocate specific staff and/or budgetary resources to track progress and manage issues/risks to ensure the Governor's deadline is met, such as: ▪ **Dedicated PMO** to track against the project plan, manage risks, and organize the Council ▪ **Dedicated staff working group** to conduct research and interviews, draft content, and produce the plan

Factors for Success in Strategic Planning

The following factors will position the Council for success throughout the strategic planning process.

Be Consistent
Leadership needs to commit to a common vision for success early on – and stick to it, rather than debate endlessly

Be Decisive
This common vision needs to incorporate perspectives and buy-in from diverse groups of stakeholders (including constituents) – but decisions should be made by a few to avoid paralysis

Gain Early Buy-In
Where policy ideas require legislative action, gain buy-in for different stakeholders early, so the state can pursue these solutions immediately

Pursue Meaningful Wins
Focus on small number of policy ideas that will make a meaningful difference quickly

Rely On Evidence
Select appropriate policies and evidence-based solutions that fit Louisiana's unique situation

Dedicate Resources
Dedicate appropriate resources so the Council can move towards a quick execution

Meeting #1 | Subcommittee Chair Meeting Overview

To kick off the effort, it is critical the Subcommittee Chairs convene to set the vision and plan forward for the effort. The design below can be accomplished in two hours and will position the Chairs to answer key questions for how they will lead the creation of the Rural Revitalization Strategic Plan.

TOPIC	PURPOSE	QUESTIONS ANSWERED
Part 1: Setting the Vision (30 mins)	Highlight the importance of the Council's work by aligning on the group's vision for the future of rural Louisiana	What is the ultimate impact the Council is striving to have on rural Louisiana? In an ideal world, what does the future of rural Louisiana look like?
Part 2: Scoping the Plan (45 mins)	Answer key questions on how the strategic plan should be structured (e.g., many initiatives or top priorities, short-term wins or long-term impact, general focus areas or specific timelines, etc.)	What components need to be included in the strategic plan to meet the Governor's request? How should it be structured to best drive progress towards the Council's vision?
Part 3: Organizing the Council (45 mins)	Align on how the Council and Subcommittee Chairs will operate and make decisions	What are the rules and organizing principles that should govern the way our Council operates and functions? What are the meeting cadences and feedback mechanisms needed to be successful?

Meeting #2 | Full Council Meeting Overview

To kick off the effort, it is critical the Full Council convenes to create a shared understanding of the rural landscape. The design below can be accomplished in four hours and will position the Council to begin prioritizing challenges to address in the Rural Revitalization Strategic Plan.

TOPIC	PURPOSE	QUESTIONS ANSWERED
Part 1: Aligning on Council Vision (45 mins)	Set the tone for the Council by sharing the Subcommittee Chair's common vision for "Rural Revitalization" and how the Council will operate	How will the Council operate to develop the strategic plan? What role will each member play, both individually and collectively?
Part 2: Understanding the Landscape (75 mins)	Introduce research on rural landscape of Louisiana, key challenges each Subcommittee can consider, and what other communities are doing around the country to solve for similar challenges*	What are the current challenges facing rural Louisiana? What has worked well elsewhere and what are pitfalls to avoid? How can the Council bring in these lessons learned from other states?
Part 3: Getting to Work (120 mins)	Provide each Subcommittee an opportunity to dive into the research on their topic, begin prioritizing key focus areas to explore, and understand next steps for the Council as a whole	What are each Subcommittee's priorities to focus on when developing the strategic plan? How will the Council stay involved in the process moving forward?

*Some preparation for Part 2 must take place in advance of the meeting

# Establishing a Strong Program Management Office

A strong program management office (PMO) will do the following things to support the execution of the Council's duties.

Track progress against project plan and performance metrics – *a strong PMO will keep the Council on track to meet their deadlines, facilitate feedback, complete draft reviews, and report out on progress to the Governor's team*

Facilitate effective meetings and bring in subject matter experts – *a strong PMO will plan, manage, and facilitate effective meetings for the Council, and convene the right people at the right time, including subject matter experts when appropriate*
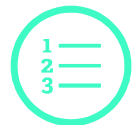
Identify and mitigate risks – *a strong PMO will work with Council leadership, including the Council Chair and Subcommittee Chairs, to identify and raise any risks to the effort and mitigate them as necessary*

Make connections across the Council and facilitate integration – *a strong PMO will use its holistic view of the Council to identify interdependencies between topic areas and facilitate integration across Subcommittees*

Phase 2: Identifying Challenges

Considerations for the Council when assessing the challenges present across rural Louisiana communities

Identifying Challenges | Toolkit

For the Council to pinpoint the state's most pressing rural needs, it must first better understand the inherent nuances of these needs. Obtaining valuable insights from desk and field research will inform the Council on how these issues are connected and can be most effectively addressed.

ROADMAP ACTIVITIES

❑ Conduct research (e.g., state agency data, other state commissions, academic desk research) on Subcommittee topics to get baseline, data-driven understanding

❑ Conduct outreach to rural communities, including issuing surveys or facilitating interviews with parish leaders, state-level legislators, and community members to assess priority challenges

❑ Conduct focus groups or individual interviews with relevant State agencies, businesses, nonprofits, and academic institutions to understand and incorporate stakeholder perspectives

❑ Synthesize insights and identify interdependencies across the challenges to support Phase 3

TOOLKIT RESOURCES

Louisiana Research Starter Packet
(Page 14)
Provides a list of Subcommittees and its members, and one-page primer on each of the nine Subcommittee topics, based on publicly available data collected during desk research

Challenges of Rural Louisiana and Rural America
(Page 24)
Includes broad overview of rural Louisiana and rural America's challenges, the potential implications of COVID-19, and relevant demographics

Next Steps for Council Research
(Page 28)
Lists next steps for the Council to conduct deep dive research into rural Louisiana

Effective Community Interviews
(Page 29)
Highlights leading practices in gathering community-driven insights through field research

Council Subcommittees

The Council is broken up into nine Subcommittees, each responsible for a particular topic area listed in the Governor's Executive Order.

SUBCOMMITTEE TOPIC AREA	SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR	SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS
Agriculture	**Dr. Mike Strain** Commissioner, Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry	Roy Holleman, Ronnie Anderson, Harper Armstrong, Orlando McMeans, Dr. Bill Richardson
Broadband	**Leslie Durham** Chairwoman, Broadband for Everyone in Louisiana	Roy Holleman, Jeff Arnold, Adam Terry, Lester Wayne Johnson
Clean Water	**Pat Credeur** Executive Director, Louisiana Rural Water Association	Leslie Durham, Guy Cormier, John Gallagher
Economic Development	**Don Pierson** Secretary, Louisiana Economic Development	Lieutenant Governor Billy Nungesser, Jack Montoucet, Guy Cormier, John Gallagher, Mike Ranatza, Keith Cunningham, Traci Watts, James Davison, Clint Vegas, Robert Taylor, Bolo Taylor
Education	**Dr. Monty Sullivan** President, Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS)	Lester Wayne Johnson, Ray Morrison, Henry Gremillion, Orlando McMeans, Dr. Bill Richardson
Finance and Housing	**Keith Cunningham** Executive Director, Louisiana Housing Corporation	Robert Taylor, John Gallagher, James Davison, Katrina Jackson, Roy Holleman, Orlando McMeans
Healthcare	**Randy Morris** Chairman, Rural Hospital Coalition	Lester Wayne Johnson, Ray Morrison, Adam Terry, Henry Gremillion
Infrastructure	**Dr. Shawn Wilson** Secretary, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development	Colonel Kenny Donnelly, Guy Cormier, John Gallagher, Jeff Arnold, Keith Cunningham, Traci Watts, Pat Credeur, Adam Terry
Workforce Development	**Ava Dejoie** Executive Director, Louisiana Workforce Commission	Clint Vegas, Major Thibaut, Leslie Durham

Subcommittee assignments based on information provided by Governor's Office on March 16, 2020.

Agriculture

As one of the state's top 3 productive sectors, agriculture contributes $11.7B to the Louisiana economy. However, an aging workforce and high reliance on certain commodities render the state's agricultural economy vulnerable to disruption. Technologies to modernize the industry can vastly improve agricultural efficiency.

SELECT CHALLENGES

The workforce is aging and there are no clear successors for small farms.
- The typical farmer is 58 years old, far above Louisiana's median age of 37.3.

Louisiana's agricultural dependence on five commodities make the state economy vulnerable to crop disruptions.
- Poultry, sugarcane, soybeans, rice, and feed grain crops make up 72% of the agriculture economy.
- Soybean farmers collected over $135M from the federal government to make up for the slump in soybean sales due to global trade disruptions.

NOTEWORTHY EFFORTS

- **Louisiana Farm Bureau's Young Farmer & Ranchers program** focuses on the development of the next generation of agricultural leaders.
- **Louisiana's Agricultural Economic Development Assistance** helps agribusinesses get connected to loans, grants, supplies, and other supportive entities.
- **The state's agritourism campaign**, launched in 2019, promotes the recreational/educational benefits of visiting diverse agricultural attractions.

BROADBAND'S IMPACT

- **Precision agriculture** can help farmers detect crop or soil variances in the field and can ultimately lead to quicker treatment and increased yields.
- **Connected technologies** can improve real-time records, enable greater oversight of crop performance, and ultimately increase farmer quality of life.
- **Increased access to markets** can increase farmers' revenue.

POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITES TO EXPLORE

- **Future technologies,** such as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and agri-bots enabled by machine learning, can improve production and resource efficiency at farms.
- **Activate novel opportunities of attracting youth** to explore careers in agriculture, such as providing more technically-oriented education/training and bringing STEM perspectives to farming.
- **Crop diversification** in the age of digital farming can help reduce overreliance on, and potential vulnerabilities of, some crops.

Sources: Greater Baton Rouge Business Report, Louisiana Department of Agriculture Top 10 Commodities, LSU AgCenter, The Advocate, USDA ERS Louisiana Profile

All information is current as of April 10, 2020.

Broadband

Expanding broadband in rural Louisiana can have immense benefits for the rest of the state, from improving economic opportunity and healthcare accessibility to enhancing agriculture and education. At present, broadband access is largely limited across many rural parts of the state.

SELECT CHALLENGES

FCC maps detailing broadband access do not accurately reflect rural coverage.
- Inaccurate mapping impacts rural providers' ability to access needed $83B in federal funding.

Residents lacking access to broadband cannot access opportunities, such as jobs or education.
- >400,000 Louisiana residents lack access to the national broadband standard (25/3mbps).
- 15% of the population is underserved, with no access to at least two internet providers.

Louisiana struggles with regulatory barriers.
- Franchise fee and right-of-way barriers serve as obstacles to broadband expansion.

NOTEWORTHY EFFORTS

- **Broadband for Everyone in Louisiana Commission**, created by Gov. Bel Edwards in 2019, helps facilitate private sector, public entities, and other stakeholders to improve availability and adoption of broadband service across the entire state by 2029.
- **USDA committed $15.5M** to create or improve rural connectivity for 2,609 households in Louisiana.

BROADBAND'S IMPACT

- **Broadband's cascading effect** stretches to economic productivity, education, healthcare, mobility, public safety, sustainability, and quality of life.
- **USDA estimates that $47B – $65B (18% of current production) of annual gross benefit** could be added to the US economy by the agriculture industry if digital technologies were fully available and leveraged at 2017 producer demand levels.

POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITES TO EXPLORE

- **$83B of federal funding for broadband is available** by application across 50+ programs and spread out over 17 agencies, and can help Louisiana's efforts in broadband implementation.
- **Public-private partnerships,** already in motion through Broadband for Everyone's efforts, can support the mapping of rural Louisiana coverage and access to private sector capital and expertise.
- **Low earth orbit, hot spots, and connectivity toolkits** are alternative ways to expand connectivity in rural areas.

Sources: Broadband for Everyone in Louisiana, BroadbandNow Louisiana Profile, BroadbandNow Research, Deloitte "The Promise of Smart Rural Communities," FCC Rural Digital Opportunity, Microsoft, Pelican Institute for Public Policy, Purdue University, The Acadiana Advocate, The Advocate, USDA Press Release, USDA "A Case for Rural Broadband"

Clean Water

Louisiana's water infrastructure is aging and struggles to adequately meet the needs of its customers. Modernization of rural water systems can help streamline the operations of various, fragmented systems and can reduce the potential for public health disasters.

SELECT CHALLENGES

Louisiana's water infrastructure is aging, expensive to replace, and prone to contamination.
- 50% of water systems are 50+ years old with a greater risk for breakdowns and health hazards.
- In 2017, the state got an ASCE water rating of D-.

75% of the state's water systems are small and run yearly financial losses, which result in less routine maintenance and more health violations.
- Aged systems run higher maintenance costs, sapping system treasuries and limiting the ability to invest in system maintenance and replacement.
- 83% of the state's water system violations come from small systems (<3,300 customers).

NOTEWORTHY EFFORTS

- **Gov. Bel Edwards' Rural Water Infrastructure Committee** identified the state's 10 most distressed water systems. The Committee recommended loans, rate increases, state takeovers, or consolidations to improve the financial outlook of the systems.
- **Delta Regional Authority has invested $2.3M** in Louisiana communities to improve local water infrastructure.

BROADBAND'S IMPACT

- **Improved monitoring systems and smart meter installations** can result in quicker triage and deployment of resources to address water emergencies.
- **Online communications between service** providers can help small rural systems share best practices**.**

POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITES TO EXPLORE

- **Federal aid and grant programs** for drinking water infrastructure can further support the state's mission of improving access to clean water.
- **Standard guidelines for consolidation of smaller systems** can help small systems with initial steps on how to begin consolidations, ultimately leading to cost savings and operational efficiencies.
- **Integrated communication and smart meters** can support more effective maintenance and resolution of water issues and emergencies, among and between systems.

Sources: American Society of Civil Engineers Louisiana Report Card, Delta Regional Authority Newsroom, Government Technology, Louisiana Department of Health, The Acadiana Advocate, The Advocate, Water Quality Products Magazine

Economic Development

Louisiana's economy is driven by small business infrastructure in urban and rural areas. Numerous programs exist to spur business investment, mitigate risk, and spark development in rural areas; however these efforts could be enhanced through broadband adoption.

SELECT CHALLENGES

The state's economy depends on small businesses.
- 15% of businesses employ ≤20 people, equaling approximately 20% of the state's labor force.
- Including nonemployers, 97% employ ≤20 people.

Coastal flooding is a major threat to rural households and commercial activity.
- 50% of the state is below sea level and by 2067, 1.2M will be flooded out by rising sea levels.
- Flood risk can deter investors from developing projects in low-lying rural areas.
- From 2004-2015, insurance premiums increased by 67% on average statewide, driven by flood risk.
- Approx. $60M was spent on relocating low-lying towns.

NOTEWORTHY EFFORTS

- **Gov. Bel Edwards' Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council** helps the administration understand and bolster small businesses growth.
- **Delta Regional Authority** invested an estimated $15M in 71 projects since Gov. Bel Edwards took office.
- **Louisiana Strategic Adaptations for Future Environments (LA SAFE)** launched as participatory strategy for communities facing social, economic, and environmental impacts of widespread flood risk.

BROADBAND'S IMPACT

- **Increased sales, cost savings, and job creation** are some of the effects that small business owners report as a result of broadband.
- **Purdue University found in 2018 that every $1 invested in broadband returns $4 to the Indiana state economy** through increased income, tax revenue, and cost-savings.
- **Broadband can foster investment** by lowering operational barriers.

POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITES TO EXPLORE

- **Broadband initiatives** can spur economic development opportunities among Louisiana's robust network of small businesses, by opening up new markets and allowing for operational expansion.
- **Robust community plans** for welcoming residents relocating from coastal towns due to rising sea levels can ensure that everyone has reliable opportunities for economic prosperity.
- **Recommendations from partnerships and summits on rural issues,** including LA SAFE, the Louisiana Rural Economic Development Summit (LaRuE), and the Louisiana Rural Prosperity Summit, can further guide the state in sustainable economic development initiatives.

Sources: Bloomberg, BroadbandUSA, Delta Regional Authority, Louisiana Strategic Adaptations for Future Environments, Natural Resources Defense Council, Purdue University, The Advocate, US Small Business Administration Louisiana Small Business Profile

Education

Rural education is limited by a lack of funding, which has made it difficult to recruit qualified teachers. Additionally, many rural students lack broadband connections at home, putting them at an even greater educational disadvantage compared to their urban peers.

SELECT CHALLENGES

There is a rural-urban educational gap, leading to sizeable differences in potential earnings.
- 20% of rural residents (age 25+) did not complete high school (14.3% in urban areas).

Budget constraints make it difficult to recruit highly qualified teachers to teach in rural areas.
- Teachers in rural district are paid significantly less than in urban districts. Some rural teachers are paid over $20,000 less than other districts.

Some students do not have technology that could facilitate learning outside of school hours.
- There is almost a 1:1 ratio of computers to students, but students can only use them in school.

NOTEWORTHY EFFORTS

- **Year-long residencies under mentor educators** for college seniors aspiring to be teachers help with career development.
- **Alternative-certification programs pilots** assist augmentation of teacher skills.
- **A $1,000 teacher salary increase**, part of a 2019 $200M state education budget increase, demonstrates the value of teachers.
- **$64M in federal funding since 2015** on school broadband connectivity.

BROADBAND'S IMPACT

- **Online classes and classroom resources** can save schools $600 per student by allowing educators to provide materials digitally. In Florida, virtual schooling saved taxpayers >$2,700 per student in the 2017-2018 school year.
- **Online certifications and trainings** allow teachers to further their own development.
- **Distance learning** can support education outside the traditional classroom.

POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITES TO EXPLORE

- **Additional salary or fringe benefits/incentives** for teachers in rural areas can help attract a larger pool of qualified educators to areas lacking in them.
- **Teacher development** via increased access to virtual teaching materials, workplans, and subject trainings/certifications can develop teachers professionally and enhance classroom effectiveness.
- **Distance learning capabilities** are increasingly important for closing the rural-urban education divide, especially now with statewide school closures as a result of COVID-19.

Sources: BroadbandUSA, EducationSuperHighway, Education Week, Florida Virtual School, Louisiana Believes, The Advocate, USDA ERS Louisiana Profile, WAFB

Finance and Housing

Low rental housing supply and few credit options for lower-income, rural borrowers strain abilities to obtain adequate and affordable housing in rural Louisiana. Collaboration across public and private sectors attempts to address the problems, yet plenty of room exists for improvement.

SELECT CHALLENGES

Rural homeownership is higher than US average, however rural households have lower home values.
- 53.7% of rural & small town homes have <$100,000 values, compared to 40.6% of rural homes nationally.

Rural residents have few loan options, forcing many to rent, further raising rental prices.
- In 2013, only 17.6% of loans came from rural areas. 27.4% of rural applicants were denied a loan approval, compared to 19% of urban applicants.
- Only 25% of housing stock is dedicated to rental and approximately 50% of renters are cost-burdened.
- 50% drop in mobile home shipments (2006-2013), largely due to high-interest and unfavorable loans.

NOTEWORTHY EFFORTS

- **State collaboration across private and public sectors,** such as with the Louisiana Housing Corporation and HUD, aims to construct affordable housing projects.
- **Gov. Bel Edwards' Housing Heroes Initiative** aided people displaced by 2016 flooding.
- **Louisiana Housing Corporation and the Rural Rental Housing Association** promote and offer resources for affordable rural housing across the state.

BROADBAND'S IMPACT

- **A 2017 report showed that home values can increase by an average of 3.1%** with broadband access.
- **Broadband adoption in new housing helps** can decrease the digital and financial literacy divide between rural and urban communities.
- **Digital mortgage screenings and transactions** can augment security of these processes for buyers/renters in rural areas.

POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITES TO EXPLORE

- **Federal financial incentives and grant programs** can subsidize construction of affordable housing options in rural areas of the state.
- **State-level options for rural residential mortgage loans,** similar to the federal-level USDA's Single Family Housing Guaranteed and Single Family Housing Direct programs, can help alleviate some of Louisiana's rural housing issues.
- **Residential zoning law amendments** can increase residential density and offer more flexible/diverse housing options in order to make rural housing more accessible and affordable.

Sources: BroadbandUSA, Forbes, Louisiana Housing Corporation, Housing Assistance Council Rural Data Portal Louisiana Housing Data, Housing Assistance Council Rural Data Portal United States Housing Data, NACEDA The State of Housing in Louisiana, Rural Rental Housing Association of Louisiana, USDA Rural Development – Income and Property Eligibility Site

All information is current as of April 10, 2020.

Healthcare

Rural healthcare faces unique challenges from limited health insurance, workforce retention, and accessibility barriers to health facilities. Broadband presents opportunities to help relieve some of these disparities through telehealth and virtual opportunities, increasingly important due to COVID-19.

SELECT CHALLENGES

Those without health insurance are less likely to receive preventative services, which can lower life expectancy in constituents.
- 8% of Louisiana residents lack health insurance and rural residents are more dependent on Medicaid.

Rural healthcare facilities struggle to attract a regular workforce, leading to staff shortages.
- 150 primary care Health Professional Shortage Areas exist statewide (4th most in Delta Region).

Health outcomes among rural residents are much worse compared to those in urban areas.
- Non-metro parishes have lower life expectancies and higher rates of diabetes than metro parishes.

NOTEWORTHY EFFORTS

- **Gov. Bel Edwards expanded Medicaid** in 2016, resulting in nearly 500,000 additional enrollees.
- **Louisiana Department of Health's Primary Care and Health Care Workforce Development Program** offers loan repayment, tax incentives, and professional services to attract healthcare workers to rural and underserved jobs.
- **160 Rural Health Clinics (11th most in US)** operate to enhance rural access to healthcare.

BROADBAND'S IMPACT

- **Telehealth** provides residents with access to healthcare from afar, and reduces budgetary constraints of building and maintaining clinics. It can reduce hospital admissions by 25% and shorten hospital stays by 59%.
- **Virtual workforce training** can allow specialists in rural areas to care for patients, while allowing PCPs to expand their practical education to a broader range of medical areas.
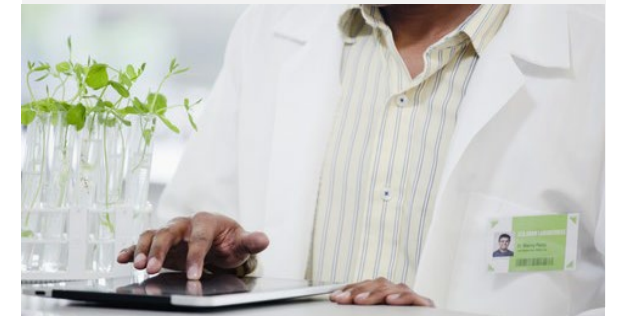
POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITES TO EXPLORE

- **Virtual health services** can connect rural patients with healthcare providers via video chat, mobile applications, text-based messaging, and analog telephones.
- **Federal programs, such as Accessing Telehealth through Local Area Stations**, a Department of Veterans Affairs initiative through which Walmart delivers telehealth sessions to veterans, is one innovative example. A Veterans Affairs study in 2014 found telehealth saves $2,000 annually per patient.
- **Public-private partnerships** with businesses can make healthcare more accessible to rural residents via the private entity's local footprint, easing financial burdens on local governments.

Sources: BroadbandUSA, Deloitte Narrowing the rural-urban health divide, HRSA Data HPSA, PBS, RHIhub Healthcare Access in Rural Communities, RHIhub Louisiana Profile, RHIhub Rural Data Explorer, RHIhub Rural Health Clinics (RHC), The Advocate, US Census Health Insurance Coverage in the United States

Infrastructure

Rural infrastructure faces deteriorating conditions, threatening quality of life and commercial prospects. While initiatives targeting the funding of infrastructure projects in rural areas exists, bringing down the aggregate costs of infrastructure through P3 partnerships and "smart" solutions could help.

SELECT CHALLENGES

Rural roads and bridges rank among the nation's most deficient, leading to residential, commercial, and agricultural transport disruptions.
- 19% of rural roads are in poor condition. Deficient roadways cost motorists $6.5B annually in vehicle operating costs due to delays and crashes.
- The state ranks 45th in transportation infrastructure (US News) and got a D+ in infrastructure (ASCE).

Declines in the state gasoline tax real value have eroded Transportation Trust Fund capabilities.
- Efforts to increase the $0.20 gasoline tax (44th lowest in US), worth $0.07 today, have fallen short.

NOTEWORTHY EFFORTS

- **Gov. Bel Edwards' Task Force on Transportation Infrastructure investment,** named in 2016, studied ways of easing the state's large, transportation project backlog.
- **$690M transportation plan,** passed in 2019 by the State House, funded 10 projects, with $40M going to rural road and bridge repairs.
- **The $1B infrastructure projects,** approved by the State House in March 2020, will improve roads, ports, flood control, and airports.

BROADBAND'S IMPACT

- **Internet of Things connectivity** can drive insights from infrastructure usage and enhance monitoring of roadway, airport, railway, seaport, and levee maintenance.
- **Mobile monitoring** can allow agencies to report inspection findings more efficiently and improve response times, while cutting operating costs.

POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITES TO EXPLORE

- **Public-private partnerships** can offer innovative financing options to typically costly projects, in addition to management and execution capabilities.
- **Different expense allocations from funding sources** can take the Transportation Trust Fund budget further and ensure costs are streamlined.
- **Re-envisioning existing infrastructure,** such as HOV-lane and shoulder-lane conversion, can alleviate strained transportation infrastructure without the need for complete replacement.
- **Financial incentives** can attract more private, freight rail investment and ease road usage.

Sources: American Society of Civil Engineers Louisiana Report Card, Governor's Task Force on Transportation Infrastructure Investment, Louisiana Job Connection, The Advocate, The Center Square, TRIP Louisiana Rural Roads & Bridges, TRIP Louisiana Transportation by the Numbers, US News

Workforce Development

Workforce development disparities affect earning potential and may lead to skills mismatches. While several programs have been initiated to improve job training, opportunities to improve access to job trainings or apprenticeships can be explored further.

SELECT CHALLENGES

The rural-urban divide affects not only employment, but earning potential.
- In 2018, 6% of the rural population was unemployed, compared to 4.7% of the urban population. Rural workers make $10,000 less, on average, than their urban counterparts, which can exacerbate the economic divide.

According to the National Skills Coalition, there is a skills mismatch in workers in Louisiana.
- 57% of Louisiana's labor market is "middle skilled" (jobs requiring a high school degree, but not a four-year degree), but only 46% of jobs are at that level.

NOTEWORTHY EFFORTS

- **Delta Regional Authority invested $4.3M on workforce development efforts** through the Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities grant initiative.
- **Apprenti Louisiana** provides three months of certified technical training and a one-year apprenticeship in mid-tier roles in partner tech firms.
- **LED FastStart** provides customized employee recruitment, screening, and training for new and expanding companies.

BROADBAND'S IMPACT

- **Online workforce development programs** provide opportunities in tailored training, workforce longevity, and future scalability for employees and employers.
- **Virtual apprenticeship programs** can increase accessibility to skills-based roles which rural residents might not otherwise have access to.
- **Future of Work / virtual work** opportunities can grow with reliable connectivity.

POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITES TO EXPLORE

- **Virtual job training programs,** in partnership with private sector participants, provide another opportunity for Louisiana residents, such as Apprenti.
- **Reskilling the workforce to prepare for the Future of Work** can better position citizens for competitive jobs in a more tech-driven economy.
- **Job training programs that focus on older workers** can reduce the skills match divide.
- **Non-traditional education pathways, such as apprenticeships or on-the-job rotations** are avenues for potential partnerships with local universities and colleges.

Sources: Apprenti, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta "Strengthening Workforce Development in Rural Areas," Greater Baton Rouge Business Report, Louisiana Economic Development FastStart, New Orleans City Business,
23 National Skills Coalition, USDA ERS Louisiana Profile,

Challenges of Rural Louisiana and Rural America

Factors in rural Louisiana are part of a broader ecosystem of issues also prevalent in rural America. Though some of these trends are already playing out in Louisiana, the long-term impacts on rural communities may not be readily clear.

Challenges Facing Rural Louisiana and Rural America

Increased Impact of Changing Climate

Sea level rise and low-lying lands in coastal Louisiana see more frequent flooding. This can impact rural Louisiana as more people will migrate inland to avoid hardest-hit areas, further stressing limited resources.

Greater Vulnerability from Resource-Dependent Economy

Rural America is more dependent on goods production, which can make it more vulnerable if an industry falters. 72% of Louisiana's agriculture economy depends on the output of five crops.

Shrinking, Aging Population

25% of Americans 65 and older live in rural areas; many veterans (4.7M) also live in rural areas. In Louisiana, the non-metro population 65 and older is 15.9%, compared to 14.2% in metro areas.

Migration of Working Age-Population Seeking Higher Paying Jobs

Between 2010 and 2018, urban population grew by 150,000 people, while rural population declined by over 25,000. Rural Louisiana's median income is nearly $10,000 less than its urban counterpart.
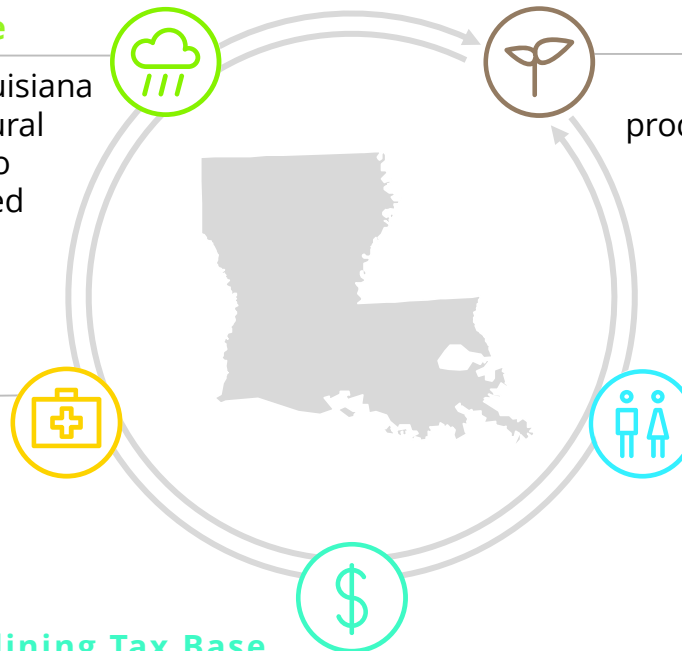
Declining Tax Base

From 1980 to 2018, Louisiana's rural population declined by over 50,000, while the urban population grew by over 500,000. With less people, there is less tax revenue for rural towns to maintain their infrastructure.

Sources: Bureau of Economic Analysis, The Economist, The Hill, NCBI, RHIhub Rural Data Explorer, USDA ERS, USDA ERS Louisiana Profile, The Advocate

All information is current as of April 10, 2020.

Implications of COVID-19 on Rural Louisiana

While this Council was established before the widespread emergence of COVID-19, the state must now address rural issues in the context of the pandemic. The virus can potentially exacerbate many of the issues rural areas were already facing and widen the urban-rural gap.

—— *Impact* ——

As businesses close and people file jobless claims, the Louisiana Workforce Commission is working to meet extra demand.
The Louisiana Workforce Commission reports that it received nearly 10,000 jobless claims per day during the last two weeks of March. The Commission typically receives 1,500 claims daily, demonstrating the record-breaking impact this virus has on employment.

Lower personal incomes and consumer confidence can further depress state GDP, and can lead to a loss of rural vibrancy as small businesses remain closed.

Limited broadband access worsens the education and workforce divide.
With "work-from-home" directives and distance learning in play, residents without reliable internet may be left behind. As of late March, 30 out of 69 public school districts in Louisiana were not offering distance learning, putting these students at a disadvantage in terms of keeping up learning during a time of prolonged school shutdown.

The need for remote work and education has accelerated societal dependency on broadband for productivity and further exacerbates the rural-urban divide.

Many businesses are closed for the foreseeable future, impacting the entire supply chain.
As economic activity pauses, participants across the supply chain suffer from lost revenues, planned investments are cancelled, and default potential increases. Agriculture and manufacturing players in the fragmented ecosystems are forced to find alternate means of clearing inventory, however many Louisiana-based suppliers are already being sunk by the recessionary effects of the pandemic shutdown.

Rural areas may be more negatively affected by the pandemic shutdown's economic implications, because of a disproportionate dependency on agriculture and manufacturing bases.

There is a lack of reported cases in rural areas, despite 16,000+ reported cases statewide.
Louisiana's Department of Health data shows that testing has been completed at higher rates per capita in metro areas, compared to rural areas, where low figures are more indicative of lack of testing rather than lack of viral contagion. Only five predominantly urban parishes have completed more than 15 tests per 1,000 residents; 45 parishes have completed less than 5 tests per 1,000 residents.

Dispersed health infrastructure and lower population density already limits access to qualified providers in rural areas. COVID-19 is further straining these health systems and the gap in rural health outcomes.

Sources: The Advertiser "Louisiana coronavirus numbers show stark disparities in testing throughout rural areas," The Advocate "During coronavirus closures, just over half of Louisiana school districts offering online classes," The Advocate "Louisiana sees 42% increase in coronavirus cases; John Bel Edwards points to testing 'logjam,'" "The Advocate "Louisiana's largest employer, state government, struggles to keep working through coronavirus," KLFY, LDWF, NYT "Coronavirus in Louisiana."

All information is current as of April 10, 2020.

Louisiana and the Broader Rural Context

Rural Louisiana underperforms on two key economic indicators, poverty rate and net employment, when compared to urban Louisiana, the rural Delta region, and the rural United States.

Rural Louisiana

749,722

Population in rural Louisiana

25.2%

Poverty rate in rural Louisiana

$38K

Per capita income in rural Louisiana

-0.4%

Percentage change in rural employment between 2017-2018

Urban Louisiana

3,910,256

Population in urban Louisiana

17.5%

Poverty rate in urban Louisiana

$47.8K

Per capita income in urban Louisiana

0.4%

Percentage change in urban employment between 2017-2018

Rural Delta Region[1]

10,955,357

Total population in rural Delta Region

19.7%

Average poverty rate in rural Delta Region

$36.8K

Per capita income in rural Delta Region

0.2%

Percentage change in rural employment between 2017-2018

Rural United States

46,100,224

Total population in rural US

16.1%

Average poverty rate in rural US

$35.8K

Per capita income in rural US

0.6%
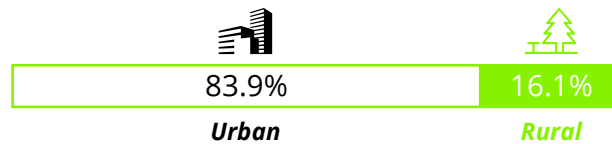
Percentage change in rural employment between 2017-2018

[1]Includes states covered by Delta Regional Authority: AL, AR, IL, KY, LA, MS, MO, TN

Statewide Louisiana Demographics

POPULATION

Total: *4,659,978 (25th in US)*

83.9% **Urban** | 16.1% **Rural**

Rural: *749,722 (24th in US)*
Rural %: *16.1% (31st in US)*

GENDER

48.8%
Male Population

51.2%
Female Population
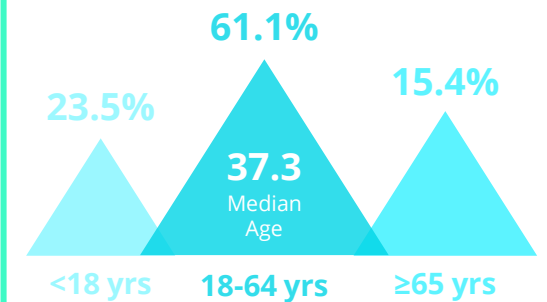
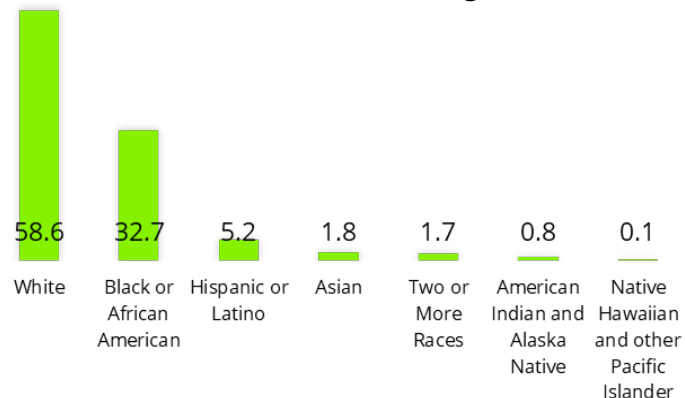## NATIVE-BORN

95.1%
Born in US

4.1%
Foreign-born

AGE BREAKDOWN

23.5%
61.1%
15.4%

37.3 Median Age

<18 yrs | 18-64 yrs | ≥65 yrs

DIVERSITY
(Racial Percentage)

White	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Asian	Two or More Races	American Indian and Alaska Native	Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander
58.6	32.7	5.2	1.8	1.7	0.8	0.1

EDUCATION
(Aged 25+)

84.8%
Completed High School

23.7%
Completed Bachelor's Degree

MINORITY-OWNED BUSINESSES
(2012)

126,100
Minority-owned firms
(30% of all firms)

BROADBAND ACCESS

89.3%
Louisiana residents have access to 25mbps download speeds

72.8%
Louisiana households with a broadband internet subscription

Sources: BroadbandNow Louisiana Profile, US Census Louisiana, USDA ERS Louisiana Profile

Next Steps for Council Research

While this is a starter research packet, there are a few ways that the Council can deep dive into topic areas to best identify rural challenges and develop the strategic plan.

Parish-Level Data and State Agency Data
Gather additional data at the parish-level and from different state agencies, which can help the state identify geographic areas of priority and better quantify impact of recommendations.

Focus Groups and Interviews Rural Communities
Engage with key community members to conduct in-depth focus groups or interviews to better assess challenges and priorities.

Interviews with State Agencies, Businesses, Nonprofits, and Academics
Conduct interviews with these institutions to further expand on stakeholder perspectives.

Synthesize Insights And Identify Challenge Interdependencies
Assess how the key insights gathered throughout the process are interconnected.

Federal, State, and Private Funding Resources
Identify additional funding sources that can help the state explore different opportunities.

Case Studies and Leading Practices from Other States
Research and identify relevant case studies and leading practices within each topic area, with an understanding of how the actors implemented the solution and how it can be applied in Louisiana.

Effective Community Interviews

To understand the magnitude of the challenges rural Louisiana faces, it is critical that the Council interview and engage with community members and leaders.

Effective community interviews…

…invite open, **community-driven dialogue.**

…are guided by descriptive questions framed in an **open-ended manner** (avoid Yes/No or leading questions) that invite community members to elaborate on their responses with context or stories.

…document **community members' stories, emotions, decisions, and needs,** as opposed to surface-level answers, in an effort to better understand their perspective.

Effective community interviewers…

- **Establish roles ahead of time.** Set clear roles with research partners – one person is the designated interview facilitator and one person is the notetaker and observes body language / emotions. If there is room for more people, they can capture photos, voice, or video recordings.

- **Set a positive tone.** Spend a few minutes on small talk at the beginning to set an informal, conversational tone. The conversation should feel open and non-judgmental. Your body language, physical presence, and clothes should match the tone and style of the interview.

- **Make room for silence.** Don't interrupt participants. Wait at least three seconds after a pause before responding. Silence is a chance for participants to contemplate and potentially provide more context.

- **Think about framing.** The interview facilitator should ask questions without bias. Conduct interviews as conversations, not inquiries. They should accept the participants' responses as true to their experience.

- **Reflect and debrief while fresh.** Post interview, always debrief with your research partners for 5-10 minutes, gathering key insights before moving onto the next conversation/observation. Be mindful of not drawing themes until enough interviews are conducted so that future conversations are not biased.

DRAWING ON PRINCIPLES OF ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

Ethnographic research, or field research, is a subset of anthropology that focuses on the study of human cultures by observing peoples' behaviors in their natural environments. Simply put, ethnography seeks to understand **how people behave in their everyday lives**. By drawing on principles of ethnographic research, effective interviews can provide an unmatched depth of insight into **how and why community members make decisions** and understanding of their experiences and unmet needs. This approach facilitates a more **holistic view** of the current landscape and community challenges, grounded in the human experience.

Phase 3:
Developing Recommendations

Considerations for the Council when designing official recommendations as part of the strategic plan

Developing Recommendations | Toolkit

The Council must intentionally design its recommendations, including goals, objectives, and initiatives, to maximize the strategic plan's long-term success.

ROADMAP ACTIVITIES

- ❑ Develop goals and objectives that address identified challenges with key performance indicators to track progress of the strategic plan
- ❑ Research and identify relevant leading practices / case studies from other states or communities
- ❑ Identify available federal, state, or private resources to support implementation
- ❑ Identify actionable initiatives with estimated timelines, owners, and costs for implementation
- ❑ Establish evaluation criteria and test recommended initiatives against standardized criteria
- ❑ Prioritize list of recommendations based on criteria
- ❑ Design implementation plans for each recommended initiative

TOOLKIT RESOURCES

Developing Effective Recommendations
(Page 32)
Outlines the process to develop intentional, evidence-based recommendations and highlights common pitfalls to avoid

Establishing Evaluation Criteria
(Page 33)
Provides a list of evaluation criteria for the Council to test and prioritize initiative ideas against

Designing Implementation Plans
(Page 34)
Highlights key considerations for the Council to prepare the initiatives for successful implementation

Developing Effective Recommendations

Developing effective recommendations is critical to the success of a strategic plan and relies on an evidence-based, intentional approach to design.

1

Goal Alignment

Create a shared understanding of what the Council is trying to achieve with its strategic plan to guide recommendations. Roadmap activities include:

❑ Develop goals and objectives that address identified challenges with key performance indicators to track progress of the strategic plan

2

Data Collection

Collect data and information to inform recommended initiatives and ensure an evidence-based process, rather than relying on instinct. Roadmap activities include:

❑ Research and identify relevant leading practices / case studies from other states or communities
❑ Identify available federal, state, or private resources to support implementation

3

Initiative Design and Evaluation

Recommend strong initiatives by evaluating and prioritizing against a standardized list of criteria. Roadmap activities include:

❑ Identify actionable initiatives with estimated timelines, owners, and costs for implementation
❑ Establish evaluation criteria and test recommended initiatives against standardized criteria
❑ Prioritize list of recommendations based on criteria

4

Implementation Plan Design

Prepare the recommended initiatives for successful implementation with buy-in from potential future implementers. Roadmap activities include:

❑ Design implementation plans for each recommended initiative

---

COMMON PITFALLS TO AVOID

- **Reliance on instinct, not evidence:** The Council must prioritize initiatives that are proven solutions with data to back them up.
- **Insufficient interventions:** The challenges the Council seeks to impact are complex, and will require sufficiently complex solutions.
- **Ineffective implementation planning**: The Council must consider the details of how each initiative will actually get implemented and get buy-in from those that will lead the implementation.
- **Lack of continuous improvement**: Initiatives should be set up to continuously improve, requiring metrics and mechanisms to monitor performance.

Establishing Evaluation Criteria

When developing recommendations, all initiatives should be tested against standardized criteria, such as the list below.

INITIATIVE EVALUATION CRITIERA*

- **Impact on Identified Challenge(s):** Does the initiative appropriately address the identified challenge(s) and meet the goals and objectives set by the Council? Will the new initiative accomplish something different than existing programs?

- **Evidence of effectiveness:** Has the initiative been successfully implemented elsewhere? Has there been a rigorous evaluation of its impact?

- **Political Feasibility:** Is there political willpower to enact the initiative? Does the State have the approval from the appropriate stakeholders?

- **Financial Feasibility:** Is the estimated cost of the initiative financially feasible?

- **Incentives**: Does the recommended initiative design minimize the risks of cheating the system?

*While answering "yes" to all of these questions will strengthen the Council's initiative, it is not necessary for every recommendation to meet all criteria for it to be viable.

For more information, see *The Secret to Programs that Work*, Jitinder Kohli, William Eggers, and John Griffith, 2011.

Designing Implementation Plans

When designing implementation plan for the strategic plan initiatives, the Council can consider the following questions to prepare each initiative for successful implementation.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR INITIATIVE IMPLEMENTATION

- **Initiative Owner:** Is it clear who is responsible for administering, implementing, and evaluating the recommended initiatives?

- **Implementation Plan:** Does the initiative owner responsible for administering the recommended initiative(s) have a plan to secure the necessary staff, capabilities, and finances for successful implementation? Are the plans and timelines reasonable?

- **Implementation Timeline:** How long will the initiative take to implement and how long until results are observed?

- **Monitoring and rethinking:** Does the initiative have clear indicators that define success? Is there a plan for collecting timely and accurate data to monitor the initiative?

For more information, see *The Secret to Programs that Work*, Jitinder Kohli, William Eggers, and John Griffith, 2011.

Phase 4: Writing the Plan

Considerations for the Council when integrating challenges and recommendations into the final strategic plan

Writing the Plan | Toolkit

The Council will integrate their findings and recommendations developed throughout the strategic planning effort into one comprehensive plan to deliver to the Governor.

ROADMAP ACTIVITIES

❑ Compile information, drafted sections, and stakeholder feedback from Phases 2 and 3 to write the first draft for Subcommittee Chair review

❑ Complete a series of drafts for review by the full Council, Governor's Office, and key stakeholders

❑ Revise the plan with edits for full Council review and Council Chairman sign-off

❑ Deliver final plan to the Governor

❑ Support the Governor's Office as needed in developing communications campaign for plan distribution
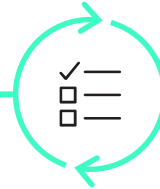
TOOLKIT RESOURCES

Strategic Plan Outline
(Page 37)
Outlines the recommended sections, content, and writing considerations for the strategic plan

Additional Resources
(Page 39)
Highlights additional published articles on various strategic planning approaches

Strategic Plan Outline (1/2)

Based on analysis of strategic plans from across the country, including Louisiana, and Deloitte leading practices, the below outline will position the Council for success when developing the plan.

SECTION	CONTENTS	WRITING CONSIDERATIONS
I. Executive Summary What does the plan cover?	▪ Overview of contents of the plan	The Executive Summary should introduce the Council, the plan's purpose, and the Governor's commitment to the issue.
II. Context of Rural Louisiana Why should Louisiana focus its resources on rural communities? What are the key challenges faced? *Executive Order Alignment: Section 2-B*	▪ Overview of Louisiana rural landscape, including illustrative maps, data trends, and differences across parishes ▪ Overview of the needs of Louisiana rural communities and current challenges faced	Plan context should include insights from desk research, government data and maps, and stakeholder interviews to provide a comprehensive perspective. Data and statistics are useful to ground context and the use of anonymized quotes and stories from interviews can be powerful additions to the story the Council is framing.
III. Vision What is the Council hoping to accomplish with this plan? What is the future vision for rural Louisiana? *Executive Order Alignment: Section 3*	▪ Rural revitalization vision statement with set timeline	Plan vision should illustrate what the Council hopes for the future of rural communities to look like. It will set the timeframe for the entire plan and will set expectations around when the plan will be accomplished. This vision should consider insights from rural community interviews.
IV. Strategic Pillars How is the Council approaching the strategic plan? How is the Council framing the issues to solve? *Executive Order Alignment: Section 2-B*	▪ Nine Subcommittee topic areas and brief description of how each plays into the vision of rural revitalization* *The Strategic Pillar recommendations are based on language from the Governor's Executive Order; however, as the plan is constructed, pillars should be determined through a series of strategy sessions with the Council.	Plan strategic pillars should provide an organizing mechanism specific to the vision. While these could be organized by topic areas, it may also make sense to frame pillars around goals, objectives, desired outcomes, or other organizing principles. The Council will need to determine this as they are conducting research and writing the plan.

Strategic Plan Outline (2/2)

Based on analysis of strategic plans from across the country, including Louisiana, and Deloitte leading practices, the below outline will position the Council for success when developing the plan.

SECTION	CONTENTS	WRITING CONSIDERATIONS
V. Goals & Objectives What are the goals and objectives the plan is aiming the achieve? How will the State measure progress? *Executive Order Alignment: Section 2-B*	▪ Priority goals (across all Subcommittee topic areas) to accomplish in set timeframe (e.g., standing up an Office of Rural Revitalization) ▪ Objectives aligned to each goal with key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure success	Effective goals and objectives should be outcomes-oriented and address the interdependencies of challenges and Subcommittee topic areas. Goals should be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timebound. This section will enable a holistic view of the State's progress towards achieving the vision and should include specific KPIs to track during initiative implementation.
VI. Initiatives What initiatives will the State undertake to meet its goals and objectives? How will these be implemented? *Executive Order Alignment: Section 2-B, 2-D*	▪ Specific initiatives to accomplish each objective (policy and/or legislative recommendations) ▪ Associated timelines per initiative ▪ Estimated costs per initiative ▪ Assigned owners & roles (e.g., RACI matrix)	Using research into best practices from other states, recommend specific initiatives that will enable progress on each goal and objective. Including timelines, costs, and owners will support the design of realistic and implementable recommendations. The plan should specify mechanisms to hold initiative owners accountable for progress.
VII. Resource Assessment How will these initiatives be funded? *Executive Order Alignment: Section 2-C*	▪ State, federal, and private funding and/or financing opportunities available ▪ Additional resources needed to implement initiatives and plan to obtain (e.g., legislative action, etc.)	Research and outline key funding and/or financing opportunities for the state to consider when implementing each initiative. If additional resources will be needed based on cost estimates, or gaps identified in initial research, provide a plan to obtain the resources.

Additional Resources

Consider the following resources to further the Council's research and inform its strategic planning effort.

- **The promise of smart rural communities: Unlocking new economic value**
  Charles Neal, Jason Miller, Megha P. Bansal; *Deloitte Insights*

- **Narrowing the rural-urban health divide: Bringing virtual health to rural communities**
  Alex Schulte, Jessica Nadler, Melissa Majerol; *Deloitte Insights*

- **Dynamic strategy implementation**
  Amelia Dunlop, Vincent Firth, Robert Lurie; *Deloitte Insights*

- **Zoom in/zoom out: An alternate approach to strategy in a world that defies prediction**
  John Hagel, John Seely Brown; *Deloitte Insights*

- **Getting decision rights right**
  Tiffany McDowell, David Mallon; *Deloitte Insights*

- **The Secret to Programs that Work**
  Jitinder Kohli, William Eggers, and John Griffith; *Center for American Progress*

- **The heart of resilient leadership: Responding to COVID-19**
  Punit Renjen; *Deloitte Insights*

Ongoing: Gathering Buy-In

Considerations for the Council when navigating stakeholder feedback and seeking buy-in throughout the process

Gathering Buy-In | Toolkit

The long-term success and implementation of the strategic plan will require ongoing, iterative engagement of stakeholders to effectively gather buy-in.

ROADMAP ACTIVITIES

- ❑ Proactively gather feedback from key stakeholders across the state when identifying challenges (Phase 2)

- ❑ Solicit feedback from potential strategic plan recommended initiative owners/implementers once initiatives have been brainstormed to encourage buy-in and ensure the recommendations will be implemented (Phase 3)

- ❑ Engage relevant stakeholders with bi-monthly meetings throughout all phases to include their perspectives and gather buy-in for the Governor's effort

- ❑ Explore the stand-up of an Office of Rural Revitalization to serve as the main coordinating function for stakeholders and plan recommendations, considering the office's mission, organizational structure, and budgetary and staffing requirements
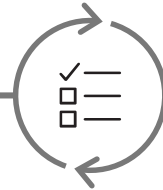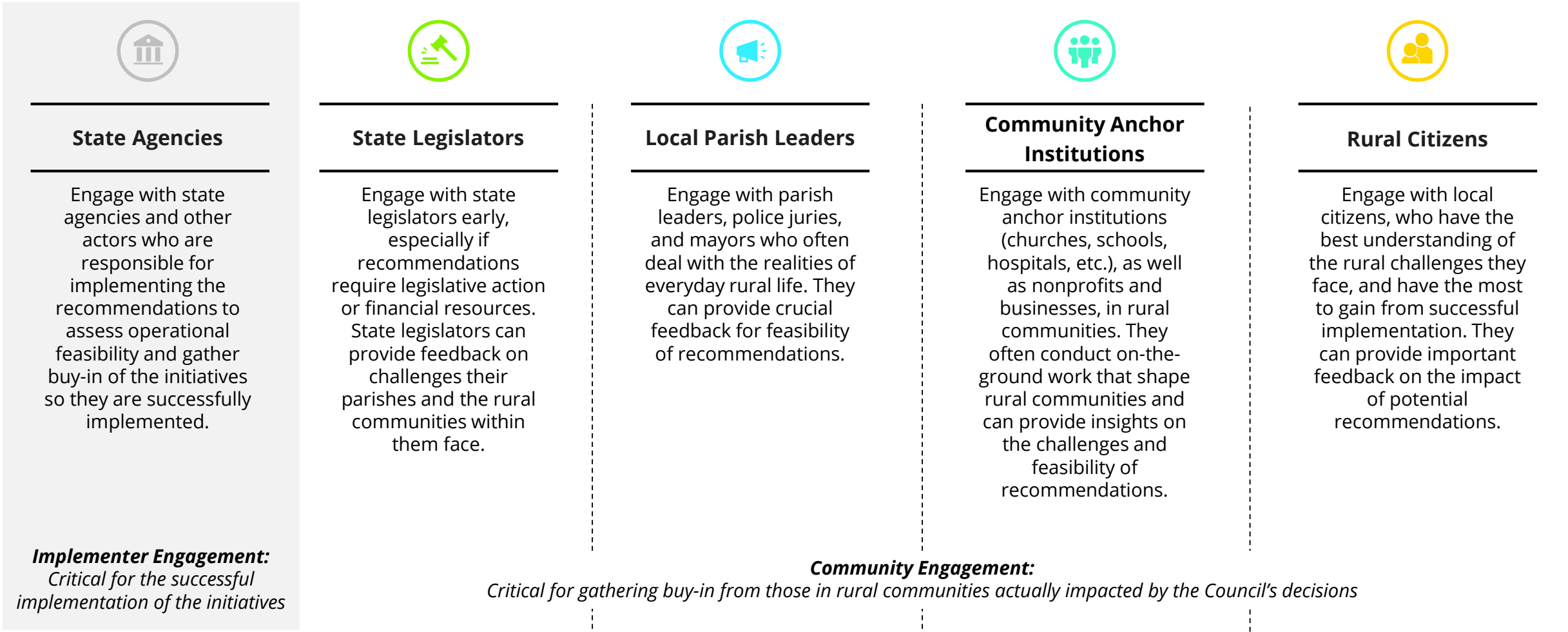
TOOLKIT RESOURCES

Stakeholder Engagement
(Page 42)
Provides an overview of stakeholders to be engaged throughout the process in an iterative, ongoing manner

Stakeholder Engagement

It is crucial for the Council to get buy-in from actors responsible for implementing the initiative, and engage with community members that the initiative impacts. This is an ongoing engagement process that requires soliciting feedback, revising insights, and returning to stakeholders to gather buy-in.

State Agencies

Engage with state agencies and other actors who are responsible for implementing the recommendations to assess operational feasibility and gather buy-in of the initiatives so they are successfully implemented.

Implementer Engagement:
Critical for the successful implementation of the initiatives

State Legislators

Engage with state legislators early, especially if recommendations require legislative action or financial resources. State legislators can provide feedback on challenges their parishes and the rural communities within them face.

Local Parish Leaders

Engage with parish leaders, police juries, and mayors who often deal with the realities of everyday rural life. They can provide crucial feedback for feasibility of recommendations.

Community Anchor Institutions

Engage with community anchor institutions (churches, schools, hospitals, etc.), as well as nonprofits and businesses, in rural communities. They often conduct on-the-ground work that shape rural communities and can provide insights on the challenges and feasibility of recommendations.

Rural Citizens

Engage with local citizens, who have the best understanding of the rural challenges they face, and have the most to gain from successful implementation. They can provide important feedback on the impact of potential recommendations.

Community Engagement:
Critical for gathering buy-in from those in rural communities actually impacted by the Council's decisions

Deloitte.

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