

*Rural Entrepreneurship Initiative * Program*

PROGRAM DESIGN **Rural Entrepreneurship Initiative** *March 10, 2000 Draft*

Background. The following proposed program design reflects current thinking regarding how the Rural Entrepreneurship Initiative can assist participating states in enhancing their climate for entrepreneurial development in rural areas. The following program design has been endorsed by the Initiative's Advisory Committee.

Two Types of Participants. Based on current Initiative design there will be two types of participants within this Initiative.

- *Learning Community*
- *Discovery States*

First, there will be an open class of participants who will share in the learning associated with the Initiative. Second, there will be a smaller and closed class of participants (likely three to five states) that will access the intensive customized technical assistance parts of the Initiative.

Learning Circle Participants

Partners for Rural America and the Kauffman Foundation strongly encourage and support the broadest possible learning from this Initiative. Because of this view, the Initiative will support a learning community activity so as to share its experiences with all interested places, organizations and communities. The learning community activity will be supported in three ways. First, a web site has been established in early March 2000 to provide access to emerging information associated with this and related initiatives. Second, interim and final reports will be prepared by the Initiative that capture these assorted experiences and learning. Finally, a workshop will be held during the August 2000 NRDP Leadership Conference in Sheridan, Wyoming.

Customized Technical Assistance States

Desired Outcome. An expanded state strategy to enhance the climate for entrepreneurial development in rural areas. Again between three to five states will be selected to participate in the customized technical assistance package.

Program Title. Entrepreneurship as a Rural Development Strategy.

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Program Elements. The states selected to participate in the customized technical assistance program will have access the following eight activities. These activities are detailed in the following sections of this document.

1. *Pre-Session Activities*
2. *First Instate Session*
3. *Between Session Activities*
4. *Second Instate Session*
5. *Post-Session Activities*
6. *Wyoming NRDP Conference*
7. *Sustaining the Effort*
8. *Year One Assessment & Report*

Why an academy approach?

According to Webster, an Academy is a gathering of individuals, interests and organizations to further learning and action within a given field of inquiry.

Pre-Session Activities. Pre-session activities will be organized around three activities and will produce up to three outcomes.

Proposed Activities

1. *Situation Assessment*
2. *Team Recruitment & Development*
3. *Customized Approach for Session I*

Situation Assessment. A guide will be provided to each state to support the development of a situation assessment report. This information will provide a baseline that can be used by the instate consortium in developing their strategy.

Team Recruitment & Development. Guidance and assistance will be provided to enable each state to recruit and develop a consortium (or team for the Session process) to (1) develop and (2) implement the state strategy created through this process.

Customized Approach for Session I. Each participating state will have unique challenges and opportunities. This process is designed to employ the basic academy approach, but with considerable flexibility to meet the special desires of the state consortium.

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Proposed Outcomes

1. *Situation Assessment Report*
2. *Consortium for the State Initiative*
3. *Approach for Customized Technical Assistance*

First Instate Session. The first instate academy will focus on four activities and result in three possible outcomes.

Proposed Activities

1. *Team & Consortium Building*
2. *Shared Discovery & Learning*
3. *Preliminary State Entrepreneurship Strategy*
4. *Action Plan for Next Steps*

Team & Consortium Building. The first instate session will provide an opportunity for shared learning, collective discovery and strategy development. These activities can enable team and consortium building (civic capacity) enhancing ultimate collective action on the entrepreneurship agenda.

Shared Discovery & Learning. A key element that contributes to the ability to evolve a viable and sustainable strategy is shared knowledge. The first session will enable shared discovery and learning thereby providing a stronger foundation for collective action.

State Entrepreneurship Strategy. The first session will focus on the development of a preliminary strategy to strengthen the state's climate for entrepreneurial development.

Action Plan for Next Steps. This session will also ensure that a game plan or action plan for next steps will be developed and agreed to by the participants.

Proposed Outcomes

1. *Refined and Enhanced State Consortium*
2. *Framework for State Entrepreneurship Strategy*
- ➔ *Interim Initiative Report*
3. *Action Strategy for State Initiative*

Between Session Activities. The process action plan will guide instate activities and shape technical assistance during the period between the first and second sessions. Four activities will likely be undertaken during this period with three possible outcomes.

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Proposed Activities

1. *Completion of gap research & discovery*
2. *Team adjustments*
3. *Drafting of the Preliminary State Entrepreneurship Strategy*
4. *Development of Action Plan for the Second Instate Session*

Gap Research. The first academy will likely identify information gaps and require additional research, discovery and analysis to be undertaken to provide the necessary knowledge basis for this process.

Team Adjustments. This process will continuously identify potential partners that may be required or desired to become part of the consortium and strategy development effort. This timeframe provides an opportunity to adjust the team going into the second session.

State Strategy. During this period the drafting team will craft a preliminary “state entrepreneurship strategy” report.

Second Academy Action Plan. Finally, the leadership of the consortium will work with the Initiative to craft an action plan for the second session so as to realize desired progress.

Proposed Outcomes

1. *Preliminary State Entrepreneurship Strategy Report*
2. *Enhanced and Expanded Situation Analysis Report*
3. *Action Strategy for the Second Instate Session*

Second Instate Session. The second session presents the opportunity to engage in a number of activities. Most importantly, the second academy should enable the state consortiums to enhance and finalize their state’s entrepreneurship strategy. Depending upon progress, the teams will have the opportunity to begin crafting a communications and implementation plan. Finally, work will be undertaken to develop a continuation strategy.

Proposed Activities

1. *Enhance & Final the State Entrepreneurship Strategy*
2. *Craft a Communication & Implementation Plan*
3. *Develop a Continuation Strategy*

State Strategy. The second session will primarily focus on refining and finalizing the state entrepreneurship strategy. This strategy will provide the foundation for subsequent action in support of creating a better climate for entrepreneurial development.

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Communication & Implementation Plan. If adequate progress is made on finalizing the strategy, the second session can be used to begin building a communication and implementation plan. It is likely that this work will need to continue into the post-academy phase of the process.

Continuation Strategy. It is critical that during the second session time be set aside to craft a framework for continuing this work into the future. Completion of this action plan may well have to continue into the post-session phase.

Proposed Outcomes

1. *Specific Input for Refining the State Strategy*
2. *Framework for Crafting a Strategy Communication & Implementation Plan*
3. *Action Strategy for Continuing the State Initiative*

Post-Academy Activities. The program of work outlined within this document is simply a guide to possible activities, outcomes and progress. Each state will approach this work in a unique way and progress at different rates. Post-session activities will be determined by the course of action defined by the state within this framework and the progress realized. However, three post-session activities are envisioned that correspond with three outcomes.

1. *Final State Entrepreneurship Strategy*
2. *Communication & Implement Plan*
3. *State Initiative Strategy*

Wyoming NRDP Conference. Time will be set aside during the National Rural Development Partnership Leadership Conference scheduled for Sheridan, Wyoming for August 2000. We expect the states to engage in two activities during this conference. First, the states will present their process experience and strategy with the larger learning community. Second, the states will have the opportunity to engage in a sharing dialogue with each other.

Sustaining the Effort. Sustaining the effort will be the choice and responsibility of each state. Hopefully, this process (and the support it will provide) will enhance the desire and ability of each participating state to sustain their emerging entrepreneurship agenda.

Year One Assessment & Report. The Kauffman Foundation has provided specific additional resources to support the preparation of an Initiative Report that will capture this process and the learning associated with the Rural Entrepreneurship Initiative.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION....

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