

SEEKING NOMINATIONS FOR INNOVATION SITES

In 2021, the National Center for State Courts, in partnership with Rulo Strategies, launched the [Rural Justice Collaborative](#) (RJC) to showcase the strengths of rural communities and highlight the crosssector collaboration that is a hallmark of rural justice systems.

The RJC is soliciting nominations for rural justice programs or initiatives that were developed in rural communities or adapted for rural communities that fall into the RJC's seven areas of focus.

To be considered, a program or initiative must:

- Primarily serve justice-involved individuals or families engaged in the court system or be designed to increase access to legal representation.
- Reflect innovation that is specific to a rural community.
- Have been operational for a least one year.
- Have a written description of the initiative, practice, or program.
- Have interest in serving as a mentor for other rural communities.

Priority consideration will be given to initiatives that are multi-disciplinary in nature (at least two agencies representing two different disciplines must be involved).

THE RJC'S SEVEN AREAS OF FOCUS

1. Increasing access to behavioral health treatment
2. Reducing victimization
3. Facilitating employment and educational opportunities for justice-involved individuals
4. Eliminating barriers of access to justice
5. Reducing incarceration and recidivism
6. Facilitating reentry
7. Reducing the number of children in foster care due to familial substance use

NOMINATIONS

Nominations are accepted on a rolling basis. To be considered for round one, applications are due **July 15, 2021 at 5pm EST**. Nominations must be submitted electronically. The nomination form can be found [here](#).

THE RURAL JUSTICE COLLABORATIVE

Rural communities face unique challenges that impact their ability to deliver fair and equitable justice. Despite these challenges, rural communities rely on their many strengths to address the needs of their residents. The RJC is designed to highlight the success found in rural justice systems. More information about the RJC can be found at www.ruraljusticecollaborative.org.

INNOVATION SITES

Innovation sites will be recognized for their work in rural communities and provided opportunities to share their successes in a variety of ways.

Innovation sites will:

- Be asked to host other rural communities for both in-person and web-based visits (up to 6 per year).
- Will be featured on the RJC Online Resource Center and in a webinar and podcast.
- Receive travel costs and waived fees to attend up to two regional trainings hosted by the RJC over the two-year period beginning August 1, 2021.

ADVISORY COUNCIL

The work under the RJC is supported by an [advisory council](#) composed of rural judges along with additional stakeholders in the justice, child welfare, and behavioral health systems. The advisory council will guide the initiative and identify innovative programs and practices.

DEFINING “RURAL”

The RJC has adopted an inclusive approach that embraces the geographic, economic, social, and demographic diversity of rural communities. The Rural Health Information Hub, supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), created a [tool](#) to determine whether a specific location is considered rural based on various definitions.

We encourage you to verify if your community is defined as rural using this tool before you apply. If the tool does not define your community as rural, please explain why you consider your service area to be rural.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For questions or additional information, please contact Kristina Bryant at kbryant@ncsc.org.