

## About Us

The Rural Community College Alliance is a network and advocacy group that helps build the capacity of member community colleges to improve the educational and economic prospects for rural America. The Alliance seeks to reduce rural isolation and share effective solutions to problems facing distressed rural communities.

### • OUR HISTORY

RCCA traces its roots to the Rural Community College Initiative (RCCI), a national demonstration program at 24 community and tribal colleges initiated by the Ford Foundation in 1994 and managed by MDC Inc. The RCCA builds on that experience, helping more colleges partner with their communities to improve education and work for economic prosperity. (See <http://www.mdcinc.org/rcci> ).

### • WHY AN ALLIANCE?

• Rural America faces tough challenges. Long-term declines in agriculture, manufacturing, mining, and timber threaten many communities. Even in rapid-growth regions, low-income residents are left behind. Education often is undervalued.

• Rural communities have many assets &mdash; rich cultural and natural resources, and people who have strong ties to the land, their towns, neighbors, and families.

• RCCA helps colleges build their communities' capacity for sustainable development. Rural community colleges prepare adults of all ages and backgrounds for new opportunities. They also can lay the foundation for a stronger economy through strategic planning and leadership development, workforce training, entrepreneurship education, and small business assistance.

• Rural community colleges often find themselves isolated from peer institutions and cutting-edge ideas. Few national forums focus on the unique challenges facing our colleges and communities. RCCA provides opportunities to learn from peers and national experts. In turn, these experiences strengthen member colleges and make them more effective catalysts for community renewal.

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