

ADVANCING RACIAL EQUITY

The RRDCs have several initiatives under way to center and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion—from facilitating collaborations with tribal colleges to supporting training for communities to engage in civil dialogues around race relations.



www.rrdc.info

Coming Together for Racial Understanding

This initiative promotes community dialogues that lead to action related to improving race relations. Currently 29 state teams have participated in an intensive train-the-trainer process. While the work was initially envisioned as taking place through in-person dialogues, the COVID environment has led to adopting innovations for continuing to advance this work through virtual spaces. <http://srdc.msstate.edu/civildialogue/index.html>



Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers

In partnership with the USDA Office of Partnership and Public Engagement, four sets of training materials were developed to build capacity with professionals serving underserved farmers and ranchers. These materials included recorded training videos, PowerPoints with speaker notes, and other support materials covering: (1) Understanding the Needs of Underserved Farmers and Ranchers, (2) Heirs' Property, (3) Farm Financial Literacy, and (4) Key Issues to Tap Farm Bill Opportunities and Advance Conservation. Professionals such as Cooperative Extension Service and non-profit agencies that seek to aid disadvantaged farmers/ranchers can access these tools to build their capacity to serve. <http://srdc.msstate.edu/community-prosperity/capacity-workshops>

1890 and 1862 Cooperative Extension Service Partnership Strategies

Cooperative Extension Service leaders in the South are joining with the RRDCs in exploring opportunities to better align efforts across the 1862 and 1890 system. Through a dialogue-to-change model, these leaders are thoughtfully considering action steps in a collaborative manner.

Heirs' Property Resolutions and Prevention

The Southern region is particularly plagued with issues around heirs' property—defined by USDA as land that has been passed down informally through generations, in most cases without a will. Land held in this manner leads to limitations of land usage and can prevent leveraging the resource in significant ways. African American communities in the southern Black Belt have been particularly affected, although similar situations exist in the Mississippi Delta, in white communities in Appalachia, with Native Americans living on tribal lands, and in the Hispanic Colonias in South Texas. The RRDC in the South is partnering with the Cooperative Extension System, researchers, and non-profits in the South to explore opportunities for a regional capacity building response including policy implications, outreach/education needs, research priorities, and partnership opportunities. http://srdc.msstate.edu/heir_property/index.html

1862 and 1994 Land Grant University Collaboration

The RRDC in the North Central region is facilitating new collaborations between 1862 and 1994 Land Grant Institutions. One result of this effort was a new collaboration with faculty at the College of the Menominee Nation and Michigan State University. The collaboration includes research, extension and outreach related to broadband use and business development in rural and tribal areas, and resulted in a funded \$500,000 NIFA grant application.



This material is based, in part, upon work that is supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under current and past awards.