Breaking Down Biases Affecting Rural California

We need one another.
Introductions

**Moderator:**
Jack Forinash, Executive Director, Blue Sky Center
blueskycenter.org

**Panelists:**
Erika Holzhauer, Rural Development Specialist, Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC)
rcac.org

Alicia H. F. Sebastian, Director of Housing and Community Development Programs, California Coalition for Rural Housing
calruralhousing.org

Danielle M. Mazzella, Preservation & Data Manager, California Housing Partnership
chpc.net

Ilene J. Jacobs, Director of Litigation, Advocacy & Training (California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc.)
crla.org

Ann James, Program Officer – Research & Analytics, Department: Knowledge, Impact, & Strategy, Enterprise Community Partners
enterprisecommunity.org
Panel Discussion Overview

Introductions - 5 minutes

Framing the panel’s purpose (Jack) - 5 minutes

Rural data gaps and the consequences on allocation of resources (Alicia and Danielle) - 10 minutes

Needs in rural areas (Ilene) - 10 minutes

Case studies of best practices (Ann and Erika) - 20 minutes

Plenty of time for questions and group discussion (everyone!) - 30 minutes

Moving forward with actionable next steps (everyone) - 10 minutes
Framing the Purpose

Rural places are innovative and full of abundance; **rural solutions are progressive and inclusive.** We need to resist homogenizing the 90% of America’s land mass that is “rural”; no one assumes Sacramento is the same as Los Angeles, so why do we do that with rural America; if you’ve been to one rural place, you’ve been to one rural place.

Urban-rural are not ends of a spectrum but a web; **we are equally interdependent, equally valuable.** We need them, they need us.

Urban problems defined by urban institutions result in urban solutions: **this is not appropriate.** Instead look to rural places. It’s the hardest work out here. We’ve been able to figure it out. **Scale up rural innovation, not squeeze down urban solutions.**
Presenters

Alicia Sebastian, Director of Housing and Community Development Programs
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Danielle M. Mazzella, Preservation & Data Manager
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TCAC/HCD Areas of Opportunity

- Maps created by HCD, TCAC, and the California Fair Housing Task Force
- Intended to increase access for low-income families to high-resource neighborhoods
Census Tracts To Inform Policy

• Approximations of reality - demographic data on residents like race, income, and education

• Proxy for neighborhoods

• More nuanced and relevant than data collected at the county-level

• Informs everything from long-range community planning, to public health programs, to the funding programs that are crucial to creating affordable housing
Census Tracts Don’t Always Work for Rural Communities

• Quality and accuracy is suspect

• Not representative of neighborhoods
Appropriate Measures of Opportunity

- Racial Concentration
- School Poverty Rates
- Walk Score
Topographical Considerations and Existing Infrastructure

- Land zoned for multifamily development is all buildable

- Water, sewer, and power are all readily accessible
Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities

- Funding for affordable housing and transportation infrastructure
- Half of program investments are to benefit communities most impacted by pollution
Density, Infill, and Reducing Vehicle Miles Traveled

- Net Density
- Infill
- Walk Score
Rural Capacity and Role at the State

• Ability to meet requirements of funding programs beyond development
• Processes and role of rural experts
  • Fair Housing Task Force
Needs in Rural Areas
Ilene Jacobs

- Farmworker housing, mobile home parks, disaster areas, land use & planning, housing element requirements with an urban bias/rural afterthought, little definition and implementation in rural areas
- Mobile home park preservation
- Disaster recovery is especially important now
- Farmworker housing largely ignored
Rural Case Studies

How are we closing data gaps and describing the needs of rural communities?

Ann Myatt James
Enterprise Community Partners
Erika Holzhauer
Rural Development Specialist
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Who Are We?

• Non-profit organization founded in 1978

• Headquartered in Sacramento, CA

• Serve 13 western states and western Pacific
Service Area

- Alaska
- Arizona
- California
- Colorado
- Hawaii
- Idaho
- Montana
- Nevada
- New Mexico
- Oregon
- Utah
- Washington
- Wyoming
Who Are Our Clients?

- Non-Profit Organizations/CHDO’s
- Tribal Entities
- Local Governments
- Water and Wastewater Associations
- Public Housing Authorities
Services We Provide

- Technical Assistance
  - Affordable Housing
  - Water & Wastewater Infrastructure
  - Economic Development

- Leadership Training & Strategic Planning

- Loans (*short and long-term*)
  - Affordable Housing, Community Facilities, Small Business, and other
Interested to hear of other best practices. The smaller the communities the better!

Anecdotes of data gaps and resource barriers only when we can speak to workarounds.

What support do we need from each other? How can we organize to advocate for one another?
Next Steps

Advocating for metrics that are more equitable, responsible, and accurate.

Sharing resources, plan to visit each other’s places in person, advocate for each other. By knowing what we are each doing in our own communities, we can pass along opportunities and invite to relevant events.

Provide your contact information and we’ll share via email.