



RURAL CITY INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Cal Cities Staff: Bismarck Obando, Director of Public Affairs

RURAL CITY INFORMATION EXCHANGE GOAL

To recognize the value in exploring new ways to better support and build the capacity of all city officials, Cal Cities, in collaboration with local officials from rural communities.

BACKGROUND

The Board approved the creation of the Rural City Information Exchange (Exchange) in June 2019 to respond to the growing interest by local officials from California's rural communities in sharing ideas and creative solutions to the challenges these communities face that are different from their more urban counterparts. The Exchange was publicly launched at the 2019 Annual Conference and Expo in Long Beach, CA and the initiative was extended for another year at the December 2021 Cal Cities Board meeting.

RURAL CITY INFORMATION EXCHANGE OBJECTIVES

Rural communities often face different challenges than their urban counterparts – broadband deployment, housing and homelessness, jobs and job growth, healthcare and education. The issues may be similar, but the solutions can differ dramatically. With the creation of the Exchange, our goal is to:

- Provide easily accessible platforms for peer-to-peer information sharing
- Provide a process for rural city officials to submit topics of interest for webinars
- Develop and deliver targeted and relevant educational programs

WORK PLAN:

January 2021 – April 2021

1. Appoint a Cal Cities Board Member from a rural city to serve as a liaison to the board on rural city issues and concerns for a term of one year. The Cal Cities President shall make the appointment. ***STATUS:** President Cheryl Viegas Walker appointed Board Member Lakeport Council Member Mireya Turner to serve as the liaison to the Exchange.*
2. Establish a rural city list serve, moderated by Cal Cities staff, so city officials can exchange information on concerns, benefits and solutions of uniquely rural concerns. ***STATUS:** The Exchange list serve is operational and information is being distributed to subscribers on a weekly basis.*
3. Provide meeting space for city officials from rural cities to meet at the Cal Cities Annual Conference. ***STATUS:** Cal Cities staff will work with the Education Department to secure a date and time as part of the conference planning process.*
4. Once the Cal Cities website has been updated, create a web resource page on information and resources of interest to rural cities. ***STATUS:** The Cal Cities current website contains a landing page for the Exchange. Past briefings and webinars are currently accessible to all cities. Cal Cities staff will continue to add pertinent information affecting rural cities.*

5. Provide conference call lines on a quarterly basis for Cal Cities updates as they relate to rural cities as well as peer-to-peer information sharing. The agenda shall be developed by the Board Liaison and distributed by Cal Cities staff. *STATUS: Cal Cities staff will conduct a Cal Cities survey to rural cities the month of March 2021 in collaboration with Advocacy Department to inform us about areas of interest to discuss at these briefings.*

6. Establish a process for soliciting education session ideas for use at conferences and in webinars that respond to unique issues faced by rural cities. *STATUS: Cal Cities staff has emailed a request to League Partners; a newsletter article was included in the Cal Cities Advocate; and Exchange list serve subscribers were asked to [submit possible session ideas and proposals](#) for use at conference and webinars.*

7. Host three webinars annually focused on rural issues. *STATUS: The first educational webinar will be held the month of April 2021.*

8. Monitor other organizations, including the Institute for Local Government and the Rural County Representatives of California, to identify existing and additional resources for rural agencies. *STATUS: This is an on-going effort.*