

Digest of Green Reports and Studies

Title	<i>Jobs, Economic Development and Sustainable Communities, Strategizing Policy Needs and Program Delivery for Rural California</i>
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Summary	The USDA Rural Development was tasked with making sure that the needs and concerns of jobs and economic development in California’s rural communities were not only heard but that solid recommendations were produced that could be acted upon. The final report compiles all the ideas, concerns, and suggestions from 43 forums across California on the topic of jobs and economic development and includes specific ideas and recommendations as shared from over 900 Californians who attended the forums.
Key Findings	The report details the topics heard most often in the forums: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding and Upgrading Infrastructure • Improve Access to Capital and Financing • Streamline Regulations and Permit Processes • Develop a Better Definition of Rural That Fits California’s Needs and Realities • Find Ways to Expand and Improve Service to Applicants • Provide More Technical Assistance and Planning to Local Communities • Assist and Enhance Traditional Job Training Institutions • Enhance Programs and Opportunities in Specific Job Sectors: Improve Access to Affordable Healthcare, and Expanding Programs to Stimulate Green Jobs and Projects.
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide adequate funding to ensure high-speed internet access in rural California • Increase funding in infrastructure projects • Increase funding for critical infrastructure to produce and distribute greener electricity • Create a smarter electrical transmission grid to minimize electricity loss and facilitate more consumer-generated power to interconnect. • Upgrade County Fairgrounds to better serve multiple public goals: solar energy farms, disaster evacuation and response, and possibilities to consolidate agriculture products in support of value-added enterprises. • Provide funding incentives to encourage communities still without water meters to initiate meter projects. • Utilize census block group data instead of county level data to determine areas of persistent poverty. • Assign USDA staff to locate themselves in communities not currently served by an office on a periodic basis. • Convene a working group of California tribes and key rural development staff to evaluate a strategy for improved rural development / tribal collaboration. • Create collaborative technical assistance networks throughout rural California whose main focus is on alternative energy • Identify businesses with expertise to complete feasibility studies that help fledgling companies identify and solve problems creating alternative energy technologies as well as financial feasibilities. • Make “Green” a requirement at all new construction <p>Please see report for complete list of recommendations.</p>

Definition of "Green"	Green jobs are jobs that help to protect ecosystems and biodiversity; reduce energy, materials, and water consumption through high efficiency strategies; de-carbonize the economy; and minimize or altogether avoid generation of all forms of waste and pollution.
Methodology	Engaged all sectors of California's economy and rural communities allowing them to discuss the issues and offer their thoughts. To do this the USDA, Rural Development worked with the USDA, Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources conservation Services as well as the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) and the California Association for Local Economic Development (CALED). And enlisted help and support from diverse partners through out the state, asking them to take on responsibility to organize and moderate a Forum in their county.
Data Sources Cited	California's Employment Development Department, County Unemployment Rates, December 2009 (Not Seasonally Adjusted); California's Department of Food and Agriculture, Agricultural Goods Movement Strategic Plan Map; California's Drought Update, Division of Water Resources, Nov 30, 2009, http://www.water.ca.gov/drought/docs/DroughtUpdate-113009.pdf ; "MICRO ENTERPRISES: CALIFORNIA'S JOB GENERATORS", California Association for Micro Enterprise Opportunity, January 2009, http://www.microbiz.org/CAMEO2009-fs-04-online.pdf ; California's Forgotten Middle-Skill Jobs: Meeting the Demands of a 21st-Century Economy, written for the Skills2Compete-California campaign by The Workforce Alliance (TWA), Washington, D.C., October 2009; 2007 Census of Agriculture, California State and County Data, Report AC-07-A-5, December 2009, http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Full_Report/Volume_1_Chapter_1_State_Level/California/cav1.pdf ; "Economic Opportunities in California's Rural Communities: Defining the New Rural Economic Strategy", Report Prepared for the Assembly Committee on Jobs, Economic Development, and the Economy, October 2008.
Report Geography	Rural California
Green Occupations Cited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solar installers • Solar Hot water heater installers • Sustainable landscape design • Home weatherization
Green Industries Cited	<p>Building Green</p> <p>Production of viable and sustainable bio-fuel</p> <p>Use of bio-mass to produce alternative energy</p> <p>Renewable energy technologies</p> <p>Methane digesters</p> <p>Bio-mass conversion</p> <p>Solar</p> <p>Wind</p> <p>Small hydroelectric facilities</p> <p>Geothermal</p>
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