

RURAL **youth** ASSEMBLY

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE NATION

2020 National Rural Youth Assembly Summit
April 2-5th, 2020
McAllen, TX

Call for Applications and Nominations!

The Rural Assembly will host the Rural Youth Summit April 2-5, 2020 in McAllen, Texas. Fifty young adults from rural places across the country will gather to discuss the issues that they see as important to their lives and their communities. We will engage a diverse group of young people to build awareness around issues of relevance across rural geographies and identities, including income, race, culture, faith, accessibility, gender, and sexual orientation.

Rural young people offer a critical voice and perspective to our national dialogue. Our goals for this summit are to bring a select group of young people together to further explore the unique challenges facing rural youth, identify creative solutions, and provide a context for how these issues fit into national rural policy.

At the Rural Assembly, leadership takes many forms. Some of us are meant to carry megaphones, others write commentary or policy memos. Some craft art and poetry, while others stuff envelopes and work behind the scenes. But all roles are key to building community and creating change. We want all young people, especially those often caught on the margins or those serving community in quiet ways.

For Nominators and Sponsor Organizations

Who is the right person to nominate?

The Rural Assembly is seeking young people who are interested in rural and Native issues and invested in strengthening their communities. We look for individuals who are willing to engage in respectful and sometimes challenging conversations, and are committed to finding common ground to create solutions.

Most importantly, we seek participants who are excited and enthusiastic about making an impact in their local communities.

Seeking mature and thoughtful leaders with...

- ❖ The flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances on the service project site or within the schedule.
- ❖ The patience to listen to other points of view and to appreciate different personalities.
- ❖ The humility required to admit how little one knows and to be open to learning an unfamiliar point of view.
- ❖ The ability to follow through on commitments by coming prepared and returning back home willing to share what they've learned with others.
- ❖ Enthusiasm in their presence, attitude and actions.
- ❖ The commitment to strengthen their community and look out for those around them.
- ❖ An existing interest and commitment to work on rural and Native issues at a local, state, or national, international level, or a passion for other forms of service, community leadership, arts and media, writing, policy and government, or particular issue areas such as climate, immigration, justice reform, healthcare, housing, human rights across race, gender, accessibility, identity.

Our resources and space is limited, so please make your participant selections carefully based on these criteria.

In addition, we are also asking that you, as local staff or teachers, make a commitment to your young people before and after the Rural Youth Assembly Summit. We ask that you talk about the conference expectations and prepare your young people prior to their attendance. We also ask that you create the time in your organization or classroom schedule for the participants upon their return to share their experience and the outcomes of the Summit with the rest of their colleagues and peers. We strongly encourage you to have your young people share the outcomes with local leaders as well as with state legislators and their congressional offices.

What is the Rural Assembly?

The Rural Assembly, a program of the Center for Rural Strategies, is a movement of people and organizations devoted to building a smarter, greener, more inclusive rural America. If we are to build smarter, more prosperous, more inclusive rural communities, then we need to build systems where new leadership emerges and new ideas can flourish. The lifting of local voices is fundamental to building new capacity and meaningful opportunity. There is a deep need to strengthen the agency and shared purpose of rural leaders and to supplement mainstream national narratives with diverse rural representation. The Rural Assembly provides an opportunity for rural leaders and their allies to unite in a common cause, advocating for common-sense policies that improve the outlook and results for rural places, people, cultures, and economies.

Since 2007, the Rural Assembly has convened people and organizations from across the United States. The movement brings together local grassroots organizers, nonprofit and business leaders, government officials, funders, and next generation leaders, representing all 50 states and the District of Columbia. They represent a diversity of cultures, geographies, and ethnicities, and they pour their expertise into creative initiatives that build up their hometowns and communities. These causes include climate and energy solutions, immigration, transportation, creative placemaking initiatives, economic transitions and restoring our democracy.

Our coalition is united by a shared passion for achieving healthier, more sustainable, and more just communities, and is courageously taking on the challenges and barriers that would stand in the way. We make the country stronger by improving the outlook for rural communities. And we know that an inclusive, prospering, and sustainable rural America improves prospects for us all.

In 2010, the Rural Assembly led the first Rural Youth Assembly, engaging 54 rural and Native young adults from across 28 states. Many of those individuals are still actively engaged with the Rural Assembly as professionals, and some of them will serve as staff for the 2020 Rural Youth Assembly. One of the most meaningful pieces of work done by the participants of the 2010 Youth Assembly was the crafting of a vision statement for the future of rural and Native communities. Powerful and moving in the moment, their vision has emerged as one of the grounding calls to action for the Rural Assembly's work over the last decade.

"We demand of ourselves a proactive and invested community that has quality healthcare, adequate housing, and enlightened education in a safe and sustainable environment. Where no person goes thirsty, hungry, or homeless, and every person is accepted no matter who your mama is. All these things done with love tell the story of our future in rural communities."

For Applicants

What are the requirements to be a delegate to the Rural Youth Assembly Summit?

1. 16-24 years old and represent a rural community or Native Nation.
2. Interested in rural issues and want to work with other young people to strengthen your community. You do not need to be an expert! We are looking for passionate leaders who care about their communities and that represent a diverse mix of rural geographies and backgrounds, including income, race, culture, faith, accessibility, gender, and sexual orientation.
3. Committed to maintaining a positive working relationship with your sponsoring organization or program, high school, or university and to returning home and continuing to serve your community in some manner.
4. Committed to the integrity of our work over the three-day event and willing to uphold our ground rules and expectations for the Assembly.

How do you apply to be a delegate to the Rural Youth Assembly?

To apply, please complete and submit the following application from online at [the link here](#). The link can also be found at our website at ruralassembly.org/2020-rural-youth-assembly. To complete the application, you will need to submit:

- ❖ 1 letter of recommendation from your sponsoring organization's executive director, program manager, faculty member, teacher, youth worker, guidance counselor, etc.
- ❖ A 1-2 page response to the short essay questions. We ask that you submit your responses in typed form, with 12-point font. We recognize that pen and paper or typing methods of writing are not accessible to everyone. We encourage you to utilize whatever tools and approach works best for you. If speech to text or other format is how you communicate your ideas then please do so. We encourage you to have someone look over your application before you submit it but you will not be penalized for formatting or grammatical mishaps. We care about your ideas and why you want to come to the Assembly, not in critiquing the level or quality of your writing skills. You also shouldn't feel that you must completely fill two pages, if you're able to tell us your ideas in a paragraph or two.

If you are not able to complete the application and letter of recommendation online then please download the attached PDF version, complete the application and email it to Mary Sketch at mary@ruralstrategies.org. If you do not have access to a computer and cannot submit your application online or by email please let us know. We're happy to work with you to ensure that you're able to submit your

application. You can contact Mary Sketch at 919-402-7241 or mary@ruralstrategies.org, or Kim Phinney at 802-922-2274 or Kimberly.phinney@gmail.com, with any questions about the application process.

All applications are due by Friday, January 31, 2020 at 5 p.m. EDT.

The Review Process and Event Logistics:

- ❖ All completed applications will be reviewed by members of the Rural Assembly Team and decisions will be made collaboratively by the team.
- ❖ Selection criteria will be based on the young person's perceived commitment to rural issues and desire to change their communities, plus ability to contribute to a diverse representation of youth voices across the country.
- ❖ Given the limited number of slots for this event, a delegate waiting list will be created as part of the selection process.
- ❖ Selected delegates will be notified by February 12, 2020. Waiting list delegates will also be notified on this date.
- ❖ All delegates will be asked to confirm their participation by Wednesday, February 19, 2020.
- ❖ The Rural Assembly will arrange all travel for delegates in communication with their sponsoring organization, guardian, or family member as appropriate.
- ❖ All travel reservations will be completed by early March. We understand that some delegates may be flying and traveling alone for the first time. Every youth delegate will be met at the airport and will be with event staff throughout the duration of the event. In addition, each delegate and emergency contact will have the names and cell numbers of staff that can be reached 24 hours a day throughout the event.
- ❖ The Summit is being held in an accessible hotel and event staff will work with delegates needing accommodations.
- ❖ Covered expenses include all airfare, hotel room costs, transportation while at the event, and meals starting with dinner on Thursday, April 2 through breakfast on Sunday, April 5.
- ❖ Delegates or their sponsoring organizations are responsible for all incidental expenses (souvenirs, entertainment, extra snacks, etc.), ground transportation to and from your home airport, and miscellaneous meal expenses while traveling.

If you have any questions about the event please contact:

Kim Phinney, Kimberly.phinney@gmail.com/802.922.2274 or,
Whitney Kimball Coe, whitney@ruralstrategies.org or,
Mary Sketch, mary@ruralstrategies.org/919.402.7241.

Rural Youth Assembly Summit Application

Date	Name (Last, First MI)	Sponsoring Organization's Name		
Address		City, State	Zip Code	Phone
How Do You Identify? He/Him/His <input type="checkbox"/> She/Her/Hers <input type="checkbox"/> They/Them/Theirs <input type="checkbox"/>	Birth Date	Age	Race/Ethnicity	
Email:			Cell Phone:	
Emergency Contact Name (s)			Relationship to you:	
Email if available:			Cell Phone:	
I give permission for my photo to be taken and used by the Rural Assembly for media and communications purposes: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes			I would like to sign up for the Rural Assembly newsletter: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<p>1. Tell us about the types of community service, activities, or leadership roles that you have been involved in. List any accomplishments:</p> <p>2. If you are in high school or college or if you are in a career training program, briefly tell us where you are attending school or your program and what classes, projects or activities interest you?</p> <p>3. Briefly, tell us about your employment and career goals: if you're working now, where are you working and does it connect to your areas of interest? What are you interested in doing in the future? It's okay if you're not sure, we just want to know a little bit about what you're interested in, how your career interests may or may not connect to rural and Native issues (it's okay, if they don't), and to learn about your hopes and dreams.</p>				
(Application continues on p. 7)				

This application must be attached with:

- ❖ 1 letter of recommendation from a staff member or teacher or faculty member at your sponsoring organization or school.
- ❖ A one to two page, short essay application that answers the following questions:

1. Tell us a little about yourself: What have you done at your school, college, or in your community to show leadership? What can you bring to the Rural Youth Assembly? What do you hope to learn from participating in the Rural Youth Assembly?

2. The Rural Assembly works across a wide range of issue areas for rural and Native communities, such as education, economic opportunity, immigration, climate change and stewardship of natural resources, healthcare, affordable housing and homelessness, community development, justice reform, women's issues, and strengthening civic engagement. Please pick one of these areas or another issue that you think is important and tell us why this is important to your community (feel free to tell us how this issue has impacted you and your family).

3. Growing up in Mexico and the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas, the poet and scholar, Gloria Anzaldua writes about living a region she calls the borderlands. She refers to this area as a very literal geography of lands that are not fully Mexico nor fully the United States. The people and their communities are part of both countries and cultures.

However, Anzaldua is really using this reference to the borderlands to describe and challenge us to think about the invisible borders that exist not just in south Texas but for all of us. The borderlands are physically present across race, culture, gender, sexuality, class, or any other identity. Living in the borderlands can bring connectedness when we're able to shrink those differences in our communities but it can also bring the challenges of feeling like an outsider, facing fear of isolation, discrimination, and hatred as we carry our identities and try to navigate the borderlands of difference.

Describe for us, a way in which you experience or see this idea of borderlands in your community or your school or work?

4. Anything else that we missed that you want us to know? You are not required to answer this question, but use this space for anything else you would like to share.