

State & Local Policies with Potential to Advance Racial Equity & Rural Prosperity

Introduction

The information found in this table was collected as a part of a policy scan conducted for Toward Better Rural Futures, a project that aims to foster greater collaboration and alignment across local, regional, and state levels of government, equipping leaders with the tools and knowledge to fundamentally shift power, opportunity, and resources in order to create healthy rural places where everyone can thrive.

At the outset of this project, we conducted a comprehensive policy scan designed to identify state and local policies that can advance racial equity and equitable economic development in rural communities of Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC) that are experiencing persistent poverty.

How to Use This Table

This policy table is designed as a menu for local and state policymakers, community leaders, and others who wish to understand the rural policymaking landscape as well as opportunities to advance equity in rural places.

This policy assessment table is intended to be a resource and a conversation starter rather than an exhaustive list of policy and strategy solutions. The table provides a lens that communities can use to filter or think through existing policy actions centering BIPOC communities, promoting equitable development, and/or addressing structural discrimination.

Policy Scan Methodology

The Toward Better Rural Futures policy scan used a three-phase process to identify state and local policies that can improve opportunity, health, and equity in rural places. The policy scan was designed to identify high-impact evidence-based state and local policies that advance racial equity and equitable economic development in BIPOC rural communities experiencing persistent poverty. The policy scan consisted of three phases:

In the first phase – scoping – a literature review and interviews with state and local stakeholders identified 136 state and local policies with the potential to improve racial equity and equitable economic development in rural places.

The second phase was an assessment to understand which of these policies have the greatest potential to affect rural equity. The assessment included four types of policy analysis. A feasibility analysis was used to screen policies for practicability, return on investment, and ease of implementation. Practicability was determined by the number of jurisdictions that had adopted or implemented a policy or practice. Return on investment identified whether there was clear evidence that implementation of a policy or practice increases monetary, human, or social capital. Ease of implementation assessed the difficulty of implementing a policy or practice in the rural context. This analysis reduced the number of policies under consideration to 50. The remaining 50 policies were assessed for impact – including rural benefit, magnitude of impact, racial equity, and strength of evidence – as well as inclusion of equitable policy elements with potential to support equitable economic development, optimization of community assets, evaluation and monitoring, and community engagement.

Lastly, the policies underwent analysis for probability of state-level preemption. During this phase, each policy underwent a review that summarized the probability of the selected outcomes within each criterion (column).

This assessment was conducted as part of a collaborative analysis with project partners, using the information that was publicly available at the time of the assessment (Fall 2021). The probable outcome listed for each criterion is not meant to serve as a complete review of every local or state policy or practice.

In the third phase, we also re-engaged with stakeholders to gather feedback about which policies to prioritize in the next stages of this project as well as insights about the kinds of tools, resources, and convenings that would help advance and implement those policies.



RURAL BENEFIT

Will the policy or practice benefit communities that are small and/or remote?	
Yes	The policy or practice is designed to benefit small and/or remote communities and/or reflects a cohesive rural policy lens.
Unclear/Sometimes	It's possible that the policy may benefit rural communities and/or unclear whether the policy was designed for a rural context.
No	The policy or practice is designed to benefit urban communities and likely would not benefit rural communities.
This policy and legal analysis was completed with information available as of December 2021.	



RACIAL EQUITY

Does the policy or practice advance racial equity? Advancing racial equity is the process of changing policies, practices, systems, and structures to prioritize measurable change in the lives of people of color.	
Yes	The policy or practice improves the lives of BIPOC by changing policies in one of the following domains of structural racism: voting rights, stand-your-ground, racial profiling, mandatory minimum prison sentencing, immigrant exclusion/ protections, fair housing, minimum wage, predatory lending, punishment in schools, stop-and-identify laws, and environmental justice.
Unclear/Sometimes	The policy or practice addresses a domain of structural racism but does not aim to improve BIPOC lives, or it is unclear whether the policy advances racial equity.
No	The policy or practice does not advance racial equity or reinforces existing racial inequities in power, opportunity, wealth, or health.



EQUITABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Does the policy or practice support equitable economic development? Equitable economic development dismantles barriers and expands opportunities for people with low income and communities of color to attain quality jobs, entrepreneurship, ownership, and wealth.	
Yes	The policy or practice applies an equity approach to at least one of the following economic development strategies: strengthen local rural economies; prepare rural places for capital access; and expand access to quality jobs, entrepreneurship, ownership, or wealth.
Unclear/Sometimes	The policy supports economic development but doesn't focus on equity for rural places, people with low income, or BIPOC communities.
No	The policy or practice does not advance equity or economic development.



MAGNITUDE OF IMPACT

To what extent will the policy or practice's effects reach BIPOC rural communities experiencing persistent poverty? (Read our blog on identifying policies that advance racial and economic justice in rural places to learn more.)	
The policy or practice's effects will reach communities that are ...	
Very High	Rural + BIPOC + Persistent Poverty
High	Rural + BIPOC or Persistent Poverty
Moderate	BIPOC + Persistent Poverty
Slight	Rural or BIPOC or Persistent Poverty
None	No targeted effects for Thrive Rural's priority communities



STRENGTH OF EVIDENCE

How strong is the evidence that supports this policy or practice?	
Strong	The policy or practice is well supported by reviews synthesizing evidence from multiple studies and sources. Rural and BIPOC community perspectives and lived experiences are reflected in the evidence, OR there is additional evidence that the policy or practice is supported by rural and BIPOC communities.
Intermediate	The policy or practice is supported by small-scale studies; there may be conflicting evidence in the literature. OR large-scale scientific studies support the policy, but there is no evidence of support from BIPOC and rural communities.
Weak	There is little or no evidence supporting the policy or practice, or the evidence is speculative.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Does the policy include a process for engaging community members in decision making and/or implementation?	
Yes	The policy requires community engagement or ensures meaningful participation that centers BIPOC and rural voices in its implementation design.
Unclear/Sometimes	The policy may allow community engagement or meaningful participation that centers BIPOC and rural voices in its implementation design.
No	The policy does not include community engagement or allow for meaningful participation in its implementation.



OPTIMIZING COMMUNITY ASSETS

Does the policy or practice allow for context-specific adjustments that build on community assets and infrastructure?	
Yes	The policy or practice requires implementation to be tailored to optimize community assets and infrastructure.
Unclear/Sometimes	The policy or practice may allow implementation to be tailored to optimize community assets and infrastructure.
No	The policy or practice does not allow implementation to be tailored to optimize community assets and infrastructure.



EVALUATION & MONITORING









Does the policy require evaluation and public reporting on its implementation?	
Yes	The policy includes metrics or key performance indicators that will be monitored and publicly reported and/or requires evaluation of its implementation.
Unclear/Sometimes	The policy may allow evaluation and public reporting on its implementation.
No	The policy does not include metrics or key performance indicators that will be monitored and publicly reported nor evaluation of its implementation.











PREEMPTION

How common is existing or proposed preemption of this policy?	
Very Common	State preemption likely exists in at least 10 states, AND there likely is proposed preemptive legislation in at least 1 additional state.
Common	State preemption likely exists in at least 1 state, OR there likely is proposed preemptive legislation in at least 10 states.
Uncommon	There likely is no actual or proposed preemption of this policy in any state.









TOWARD BETTER RURAL FUTURES: POLICY ASSESSMENT

POLICY NAME	POLICY DESCRIPTION	 RURAL BENEFIT	 RACIAL EQUITY	 EQUITABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	 MAGNITUDE OF IMPACT	 STRENGTH OF EVIDENCE	 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	 OPTIMIZING COMMUNITY ASSETS	 EVALUATION & MONITORING
Arts & Culture									
Native Arts Programs	This type of funding aims to establish and support Native artists in gaining visibility and enhancing business resources, networking, and education that increase the economic viability of Native art entrepreneurs.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Very High	Weak	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Unclear/ Sometimes
State Arts Councils	State arts agencies aim to enhance the quality of life in communities and contribute to economic growth by creating jobs, attracting investments, generating tax revenues, and stimulating local economies through tourism and consumer purchases. State arts agencies stimulate statewide creativity, leadership, and economic vitality by providing arts and culture-related industries with programming and grants.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Very High	Intermediate	Yes	Yes	Unclear/ Sometimes
Criminal Legal System & Corrections									
Anti-Racial Profiling Legislation	Anti-racial profiling laws ban discriminatory profiling by law enforcement on the basis of a person's actual or perceived race, ethnicity, national origin (and sometimes religion, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation) without trustworthy information that is relevant to linking a person to a crime.	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	No	Moderate	Intermediate	Unclear/ Sometimes	Unclear/ Sometimes	Unclear/ Sometimes
Bail Reform	<i>Bail reform</i> refers to policies that would reform cash bail systems so that people who have not yet been convicted of a crime are not held in jail before trial due to their inability to pay bail.	Yes	Yes	Unclear/ Sometimes	Very High	Intermediate	Unclear/ Sometimes	Unclear/ Sometimes	No
Ban the Box	Ban the Box policies, or fair-chance policies, prohibit employers from inquiring about conviction and arrest history on job applications and delay background checks until later in the hiring process. These policies allow employers to focus their assessment on candidates' qualifications and skills for the position rather than their previous criminal history.	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Yes	Moderate	Intermediate	No	No	No
Duty to Retreat & Castle Doctrine	Duty-to-retreat laws oblige individuals to first try to avoid confrontation by retreating from or de-escalating threats before using deadly force in self-defense. Castle doctrine gives individuals the right to use reasonable force to defend themselves from danger in their own home.	Unclear/ Sometimes	Unclear/ Sometimes	No	Very High	Intermediate	No	Unclear/ Sometimes	Unclear/ Sometimes
Ensuring Access to Counsel for Detained Immigrants	These policies commit funds to ensure legal counsel and representation for detained immigrants through an innovative and collaborative approach that includes public engagement, the Immigrant Rights Hotline, a deportation defense legal clinic, and impact litigation.	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Yes	Very High	Strong	Yes	Yes	Yes
Juvenile Justice Reform	Juvenile justice policy reform aims to reduce juvenile incarceration rates through use of alternatives designed to increase opportunity and build stronger, more inclusive communities. Policymakers can design equitable approaches to reform the juvenile justice system by creating state initiatives to fiscally support community-based programming.	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Unclear/ Sometimes	Very High	Strong	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Unclear/ Sometimes









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Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in Governance									
Cross-Jurisdictional and Intergovernmental Sharing Agreements	Cross-jurisdictional and intergovernmental sharing agreements are legal arrangements that govern resource sharing and management strategies – such as staffing, funding, services, and procurement – among more than one entity, municipality, county, city, or town. This can help increase access to essential public services in small or rural areas.	Yes	Unclear/ Sometimes	No	Slight	Strong	No	Yes	Unclear/ Sometimes
Language Access Laws	Given an increasing population of non-English speakers in the United States, language access laws aim to ensure that individuals with limited English proficiency have language support, such as translation and interpretation, to ensure equitable access to public services and quality of care in comparison with their English-speaking counterparts.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Very High	Intermediate	Yes	Yes	Unclear/ Sometimes
Racial Equity and Social Justice Policy	Resolutions, ordinances, or executive orders can articulate a vision for racial equity in a specified jurisdiction and set goals that define commitment-making strategies to advance racial equity and social justice.	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	No	Moderate	Weak	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reparations	Reparations policies acknowledge histories of systemic racism and establish a process for creating generational wealth and increasing economic mobility for descendants of people who suffered historic harms – including direct individual payments.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Very High	Strong	Unclear/ Sometimes	Unclear/ Sometimes	Unclear/ Sometimes
State Authorization of Driver Licenses for Undocumented Immigrants	These laws aim to increase access to driver licenses and ID cards for undocumented immigrants by removing the proof of legal presence requirement for obtaining a state-issued driver license.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Very High	Intermediate	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Unclear/ Sometimes
Education									
In-State Higher Education Tuition for Undocumented Students	Laws require states to provide all students with a K–12 public education, regardless of immigration status; however, this policy expands access, allowing Dreamers to obtain in-state tuition and, in some cases, financial aid.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Very High	Strong	Yes	Yes	Yes
Universal Preschool	A universal preschool policy gives all families with preschool-aged children in a state or community the opportunity to voluntarily enroll their child in a publicly funded pre-kindergarten program.	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Yes	Very High	Strong	No	Yes	Yes
Environment, Infrastructure & Sustainability									
High Speed Internet (Broadband) Expansion	Broadband expansion aims to bring affordable high-speed internet to all areas within every municipality, community, and rural area. This expansion can be achieved through expansion and extension of broadband utility lines and increased general availability of broadband services and technology. Broadband expansion ensures that every citizen has equal access to the technology necessary to connect, work, create, play, and learn.	Yes	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Very High	Strong	Unclear/ Sometimes	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes









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Support for Small Water Systems	These policies provide tools, funding sources, and regulatory authorities to ensure access to safe, affordable drinking water as well as develop and implement sustainable solutions for small systems with violations of drinking water standards.	Yes	Yes	No	Very High	Strong	Yes	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes
Transition to Clean Energy	These laws transition states away from fossil fuels and toward clean energy, ensuring greater renewable energy production, reducing costs for consumers, and providing economic and workforce support for communities affected by coal plant closures and for development of renewable replacement power.	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Yes	High	Strong	Yes	Yes	Yes
Food & Agriculture									
Agricultural Conservation Easements	Agricultural conservation easements are voluntary agreements that place permanent restrictions on agricultural land to prevent any uses of the property that would have a negative impact on its agricultural viability. Prohibited uses could include subdivision and development that is unrelated to farm operation. Landowners sell their right to develop their agricultural property to a conservation organization or a public entity that then monitors and enforces the restrictions set forth in the agreement.	Yes	No	Yes	Slight	Strong	Unclear/ Sometimes	Unclear/ Sometimes	Unclear/ Sometimes
Agricultural Workers Rights	Agricultural workers rights provide agricultural employees with a safe and healthy working environment. Agricultural workers rights policies establish specific safeguards and rights for agricultural workers, which may address working conditions, overtime pay, paid leave benefits, workers compensation, or housing.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Very High	Strong	Unclear/ Sometimes	Unclear/ Sometimes	Unclear/ Sometimes
Health Care & Public Health									
Access to Reproductive Health Care	These policies protect access to comprehensive reproductive health services for anyone with reproductive capacity by removing barriers to health care, creating safe environments in which to access reproductive care, and addressing inequities in access to services.	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Yes	Very High	Strong	Unclear/ Sometimes	Unclear/ Sometimes	Unclear/ Sometimes
Declaring Racism a Public Health Crisis	Declaring racism a public health crisis or emergency is the first step to acknowledging the structural and intergenerational role that racism has played in the health of individuals. However, the declaration must be followed with strategic actions and resources to fully shift toward advancing health equity. Declaring that racism is a public health crisis through a resolution or formal statement adopted by a school board, health association, or public health department aims to initiate changes to laws and policies and create opportunities to advance racial equity.	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Unclear/ Sometimes	Moderate	Weak	Unclear/ Sometimes	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes
Health Enterprise Zones	Health Enterprise Zones (HEZs) are specific geographic areas that receive additional state resources due to their high rates of health inequities. HEZs establish standardized measures focused on reducing health inequities, improving access to health care, and reducing health care costs and hospital admissions, to promote healthier environments and communities.	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	No	Moderate	Intermediate	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Yes








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State Medicaid Expansion	The American Rescue Plan financially incentivizes states to expand Medicaid eligibility for adults with low income and increases federal funding by paying 90 percent of the cost for newly eligible adults. State Medicaid expansion aims to reduce the number of people without health insurance, and Medicaid expansion could lead to job creation and improvement of state economies.	Yes	Yes	Unclear/ Sometimes	Very High	Strong	No	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes
Housing & Community Development									
Accessory Dwelling Unit Authorization	State laws can either authorize or require local governments to permit secondary residences on a single lot either by allowing internally retrofitted apartments, usually in a basement, garage, attic, or addition. These secondary residences, or accessory dwelling units (ADUs), may also be detached from the main house. ADUs may be permitted in all zoning districts zoned solely for single-family homes. Provided there are no state laws that explicitly prohibit localities from allowing or requiring ADUs, local governments can authorize ADUs in their zoning ordinances, even in the absence of state legislation. ADU authorization is intended to increase the housing supply and diversity (variation in size, type, and price point), especially for locations that have limited land and space to expand.	Unclear/ Sometimes	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Moderate	Intermediate	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	No
Anti-Source-of-Income Discrimination Laws (Government Assistance Anti-Discrimination Laws)	These laws prohibit discrimination against renters and home buyers based on their source of income – for example, government social safety net programs such as Section 8 housing choice vouchers, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (welfare), and Social Security. These laws expand housing choice and supply for renters and home buyers with low and moderate income while providing access to resource-rich neighborhoods that provide greater social mobility and economic equity and integration.	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Unclear/ Sometimes	Moderate	Intermediate	No	Yes	Unclear/ Sometimes
Elimination of Single-Family Zoning	These policies eliminate single-family zoning or allow multiple housing units on lots zoned for single-family use. Elimination of single-family zoning allows construction of low-impact housing, which typically means two to four units on a single lot, in neighborhoods with single-family homes. When done thoughtfully with proper zoning criteria, such policies are unlikely to result in large-scale apartment buildings adjacent to single-family homes. These policies increase the housing supply, improve housing choice, diversify housing stock (type and price point), and may increase housing affordability if the market conditions are ideal. These types of policies are a great option for locations that are geographically restricted with limited options for expanding outward.	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Unclear/ Sometimes	Moderate	Intermediate	No	Yes	Unclear/ Sometimes
Housing Trust Fund	Affordable housing trust funds are dedicated, ongoing public funding sources established by city, county, or state governments to support preservation (rehabilitation and repair) and production (construction) of affordable housing and to increase opportunities for families and individuals to access safe, accessible, and affordable homes.	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Yes	Very High	Strong	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Yes









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Individual Development Account (IDA) Initiative	IDAs are savings accounts that allow eligible individuals and families to save for a specific goal such as homeownership or education. IDAs provide matching funds for monthly savings for a specified amount of time.	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Yes	High	Intermediate	Unclear/ Sometimes	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes
Land Banking	Land banking allows public authorities or nonprofit organizations to acquire, hold, manage, and occasionally redevelop abandoned, vacant, and tax-delinquent property (buildings and lots) for future development. The acquired properties are usually used for community benefits such as construction of affordable housing or public parks.	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Yes	Moderate	Strong	Unclear/ Sometimes	Unclear/ Sometimes	Unclear/ Sometimes
Lead-Based Paint Prevention Ordinance	This policy mandates inspection of all rental properties for lead-based paint as part of a city's existing certificate of occupancy inspection program.	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	No	Very High	Intermediate	Unclear/ Sometimes	Unclear/ Sometimes	Unclear/ Sometimes
New Markets Tax Credits	New markets tax credit policies help under-resourced communities attract private capital by providing investors with a state tax credit. Investments made through these programs are used to finance businesses or developments. Qualified community development entities (CDEs) use their local knowledge and expertise to select businesses to invest in or lend to with the funds raised through the tax credit.	Yes	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Very High	Strong	No	No	Unclear/ Sometimes
Labor & Employment									
Increasing State Minimum Wage	State laws establish increases to the minimum dollar amount that employees must be paid per hour, to promote livable wages for residents.	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Yes	High	Strong	No	No	Unclear/ Sometimes
Living Wage	Living wage policies require employers to pay wages that enable workers and their families to meet their basic needs in a specific market. These policies typically apply to businesses receiving financial assistance, contracts, or business licensing from the government.	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Yes	High	Strong	No	No	Unclear/ Sometimes
Paid Family Leave	Paid family leave provides employees with paid time off during pregnancy, after the birth or adoption of a child, or when a family member or child requires serious medical care. Length of leave, amount of benefit, job protection, and qualifying conditions vary by employer and state. Paid family leave is distinct from the 12 weeks of unpaid job-protected leave for eligible employees offered by the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Unclear/ Sometimes	Very High	Strong	No	No	Unclear/ Sometimes
Paid Sick Leave	Paid sick leave is paid time off that allows workers to attend to their own short-term medical needs. Generally, if employers provide sick leave, they offer between 5 and 10 days of sick leave a year.	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Yes	Very High	Strong	No	No	Unclear/ Sometimes









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Restricting Non-Compete Agreements	A non-compete agreement prohibits an employee from engaging in any business activity or sector that competes with the business of their employer during or after employment. Policies or laws can prohibit the use of non-compete agreements between employers and employees. These policies can range from a complete ban of non-compete agreements to a ban in low-wage jobs. Prohibiting non-compete agreements facilitates more competition within the labor market and improves worker leverage when negotiating for salary and benefits.	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Yes	Very High	Intermediate	Unclear/ Sometimes	No	No
Targeted & Local Hiring	These policies require real estate developers or businesses to reserve a certain number of jobs or a certain type of job for persons who reside in certain geographical areas (neighborhood, city, state, etc). Targeted or local hiring is often stipulated when businesses or developers request flexibility or incentives from state or local governments.	Yes	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	High	Intermediate	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Yes
Public Finance & Taxation									
Guaranteed Income	Guaranteed income is a cash transfer policy aimed at creating financial security for all individuals and families by giving cash, unconditionally (with no strings attached), directly to those who need it.	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Yes	Very High	Intermediate	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Yes
Participatory Budgeting	Participatory budgeting is a democratic process that gives community members a key role in making decisions about how parts of a municipal or public budget are spent.	Unclear/ Sometimes	Unclear/ Sometimes	Unclear/ Sometimes	Moderate	Strong	Yes	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes
Payday Lending Legislation	These laws regulate payday or short-term lending businesses by establishing limits on fees, the maximum annual interest that can be charged, payback term, and loan amounts.	Unclear/ Sometimes	No	No	Moderate	Intermediate	Unclear/ Sometimes	No	Yes
Supplier Diversity in Procurement	Statewide government contracting policy outlines specific goals for sourcing that provide capacity-building and networking opportunities for women- and minority-owned business enterprises (WMBEs).	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Yes	Moderate	Intermediate	No	No	Yes
Tax Incentives for Community Revitalization	A community revitalization tax relief incentive gives temporary tax relief for a certain period of time to property owners who want to substantially rehabilitate and encourage active use of underutilized buildings located in a historic district, downtown, or village center. After the tax relief period, the property is assessed at its full market value.	Unclear/ Sometimes	No	Unclear/ Sometimes	None	Weak	Yes	Unclear/ Sometimes	No
Tax Increment Financing (TIF)	Tax increment financing – also known as <i>tax allocation districts</i> or <i>tax increment reinvestment zones</i> – allows local governments to capture the funds from increases in property taxes generated by development and re-invest the money in infrastructure and economic development projects. For example, the captured funds can be used for construction of affordable housing, environmental cleanup, or repair or removal of deteriorated structures.	Unclear/ Sometimes	No	Unclear/ Sometimes	Slight	Intermediate	Unclear/ Sometimes	Unclear/ Sometimes	Unclear/ Sometimes

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Taxes on Non-Essential Food and Drink	These policies tax non-essential foods with low nutritional value that are considered harmful to public health – such as candy, soda, and potato chips. Taxes can be imposed as a sales tax, shifting the cost to consumers at the point of purchase, or as an excise tax on food manufacturers. Funds generated by these taxes are allocated to community-defined needs, often with the aim of improving health equity.	Unclear/ Sometimes	No	No	Very High	Strong	Unclear/ Sometimes	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes
Small Business Support & Economic Development									
Development-Ready Communities	Development-Ready Communities programs are state-level programs that help communities develop a strategic plan to attract employers, businesses, and other forms of investment. The programs identify strategies that make communities more attractive to external investments, focusing on education, workforce development, infrastructure, leadership, and marketing.	Yes	No	Unclear/ Sometimes	Slight	Weak	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	No
One-Stop Business Portal	A one-stop business portal is a website that streamlines the process of starting a business and keeping it in good standing with all the required regulatory bodies – such as the city, state, licensing agencies, and health departments, if necessary. These portals should provide step-by-step instructions for filling out and submitting paperwork online. Business portals support businesses owned by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals (SEDI) who do not have time, resources, or business consultants to help them navigate complicated regulations across multiple agencies.	Unclear/ Sometimes	No	No	None	Weak	No	Unclear/ Sometimes	No
Small Business and Entrepreneur Support (Economic Gardening Initiative)	An economic gardening initiative is an approach to economic development that focuses on growing the local economy by supporting entrepreneurs and small businesses within a community as opposed to attracting external investors and large employers and corporations. These initiatives fund policies and programs that help businesses grow and access markets outside of their local communities. Supports can include market research, analysis of industry trends, and training and certifications. Entrepreneur-led economic development creates a more diverse economy, which results in better wages, better working conditions, and more dollars circulating in the local economy.	Unclear/ Sometimes	No	Yes	Slight	Intermediate	Yes	Yes	Unclear/ Sometimes

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Tourism & Recreation									
Native Tourism Alliance	These alliances strive to improve economic, infrastructure, and investment benefits to tribal nations through increased tourism-related opportunities, aiming to boost local economies, support entrepreneurship, create new jobs, and enable Native American communities to be more active participants in their own narratives of both past and future.	Yes	No	Yes	Very High	Weak	Yes	Yes	No
State or Regional Recreation and/or Tourism Authority	This type of governing authority establishes standards for operational funding and administrative costs for development and maintenance of multi-use outdoor recreation areas, which provide community benefits such as increased quality of life through access to natural assets; diversified and sustainable local jobs; and economic benefits from tourism.	Yes	No	Unclear/ Sometimes	Slight	Intermediate	Unclear/ Sometimes	Yes	Yes

This policy table is part of a [suite of products on rural policymaking](#) to advance economic development and racial equity.

This resource was developed by ChangeLab Solutions and overseen by Shaunequa Owusu, chief strategy officer, and Kimberly Libman, vice president of policy. Policy analysis was supported by Hollie Storie, senior policy analyst; Nessia Berner Wong, senior policy analyst; Chassidy Coffin, senior policy analyst; Tyra Satchell, policy analyst; Edgar Camero, planner; Jessica Nguyen, senior planner; Tina Ansong, senior planner; and Tina Yuen, managing director. Legal analysis was provided by Sabrina Adler, vice president of law, and Katie Hannon Michel, senior attorney. Editing and production management was provided by Carolyn Uno (Tigris), senior editor, and Kim Arroyo Williamson, chief communications officer. Thanks to all the staff at ChangeLab Solutions who contributed to the creation of this table.

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This resource is connected to Thrive Rural, a small group of Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grantees that is working collaboratively toward a future in which communities and Native nations across the rural United States are places where each and every person belongs, lives with dignity, and thrives. This work is one piece of that effort. For more information, please visit [ThriveRural.org](#).

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