RAC
Rural Assistance Center

Rural Assistance Center

The Rural Assistance Center (RAC) was established in December 2002 as a rural health and human services "information portal." The RAC stems from the US Department of Health and Human Services' Rural Initiative.

To achieve its goals, RAC:

1) Identifies and collects sources of rural health and human services research, support programs, funding, and related information;

2) Archives and makes information accessible

3) Disseminates information and promotes the use of RAC's service by rural communities, policymakers, researchers, and others; and

4) Integrates information into policy-relevant and implementation-specific frameworks.

From left to right: (front row) Kristine Sande, Project Coordinator; Mary Reinertson-Sand, Information Specialist; Kathy Spencer, Information Specialist; (back row) Julie Arnold, Web Designer; Maren Niemeier, Lead Information Specialist; Naomi Lehm, Administrative Assistant.

Services Provided

Web-Based Services (www.raconline.org)
- **Funding Opportunities**
- **Information Guides**
- **Recent News**
- **Calendar of Events**
- **Searchable Document Database**
- **The Rural Monitor,** RAC's quarterly publication
- **Electronic Updates to RAC mailing list**

Customized Assistance
- **Identify potential funding**
- **Locate the right federal or state contact**
- **Find print and electronic documents**
- **Locate statistics, data sources and maps**
- **Connect you to organizations, experts, and colleagues**

Who Can Use RAC Services?

Anyone seeking to maintain and improve the access, quality, and financial viability of rural health and human service systems.

RAC Partners:

Emerging Issues in Rural American Health:
An Evaluation of the Rural Assistance Center

Garth Kruger, MA; Kristine Sande, MBA; Maren Niemeier, MLIS;
Mary Reinertson-Sand, MLS; Kathy Spencer, MLS, MS, Michelle Bowles, MPA

RAC Requests December 2002-May 2004
(n=1,188)

Request Type and Frequency

General Requests

Statistics and Research, 14.9%

Misc, 8.9%

Contacting/Networking with Others, 4.8%

Technology/Telehealth, 2.3%

Rural Access to Emergency Devices (RAED), 1.9%

Long Term Care/Elderly/Aging, 1.9%

J1 Visa Program, 1.7%

MUA~HPSA, 1.6%

Recruitment/Retention, 1.4%

Assessment Tools for Hospitals/Facilities, 1.4%

Rural Employment (job seekers), 1.3%

Economic Development, 0.9%

Domestic Violence, 0.9%

Tribal Programs and Funding, 0.9%

Personal Insurance, 0.8%

Faith Based Funding, 0.8%

EMS, 0.8%

Other Categories, 5.9%

Funding Requests

Capital Funding and Equipment, 7.1%

General Requests for Funding, 4.3%

Personal Financial Needs, 4.2%

Educational Reimbursement, 3.1%

To Open a Clinic, 2.6%

Rural Health Outreach, 0.9%

To Keep Clinics Open, 0.6%

Funding for Programs

Human Services (e.g. rec programs, prevention, etc.), 5.9%

Health (diabetes screenings, etc.), 3.8%

Housing, 3.2%

Education, 1.6%

Transportation, 0.6%

Rules and Regulations

Rural Health Clinics, 4.3%

Critical Access Hospitals, 2.3%

FQHC's, 2.2%

Define Rural, 1.4%

RAC Listserv Client Profile

(n=1090) of 1366

Pie chart: Individual 6%, State/Natl. Orgs 8%, Research Institute 5%, Gvt. Agency 18%, Rural Advocate/Foundation 22%, Other 16%, Local Healthcare Provider 25%

How Do Clients Find RAC?

n=1090

Pie chart: Word of Mouth 33%, Other 17%, Web Link 11%, Conference 12%, Email 13%, Online Search 14%
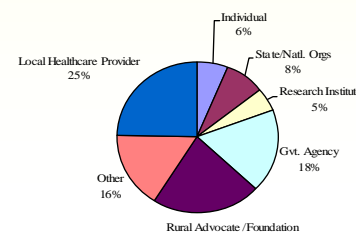

RAC Client Comments

"I just clicked onto your website and found it to be one of the most informative, easily read sites I've ever used. Your site condenses the information [I need] into a format that saves research effort for us time-crunched grant writers who are trying to survive state and federal budget cuts. Thank you for this wonderful effort. Keep up the great work." –RAC client

"I think the resources available through the RAC are outstanding - a real boon to rural health networks. I have referred your site to several of my colleagues over the years. Keep up the good work!" –RAC client
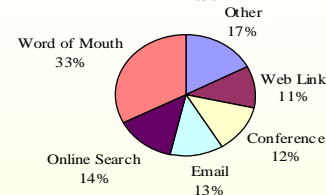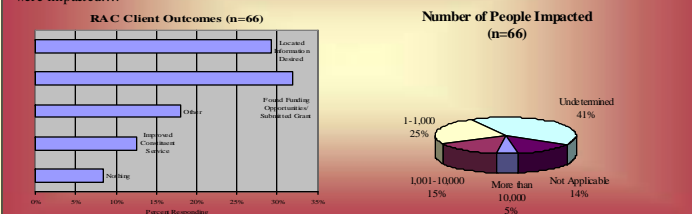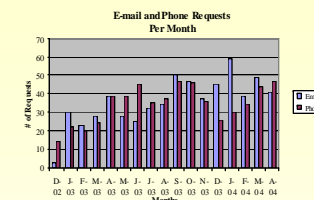
RAC Outcomes

870 satisfaction survey e-mails were sent to all of the clients to which RAC has provided customized assistance with an e-mail address on record. 770 were marked as delivered; of those, 8.5% responded (N=66). Two outcome questions were included, "What occurred as a result of using the Rural Assistance Center?" and "How many people were impacted…?"
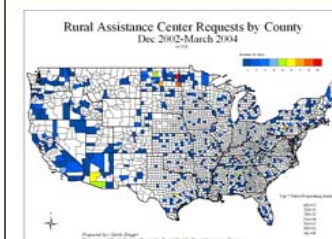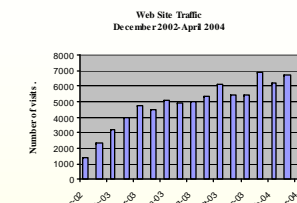
RAC Client Outcomes (n=66)

Bar chart: Located Information Desired; Found Funding Opportunities/Substantial Grant; Other; Improved Consultant Service; Nothing

Number of People Impacted (n=66)

Pie chart: Undetermined 41%, Not Applicable 14%, More than 10,000 5%, 1,001-10,000 15%, 1-1,000 25%

Clients Served

E-mail and Phone Requests Per Month

Bar chart, months D-02 through A-04, Email and Phone

- ➢**38 e-mail** requests per month average
- ➢**36 phone** requests per month average
- ➢Approximately **four requests per working day**
- ➢**1,188 requests** since RAC's inception on December 11, 2002

Client Location

Geo-coded data has been used from requestors to determine where people are being served.

Rural Assistance Center Requests by County
Dec 2002-March 2004

RAC Web Site Traffic

Web Site Traffic December 2002-April 2004

Bar chart: Dec02, Feb03, Apr03, Jun03, Aug03, Oct03, Dec03, Feb04, Apr04

There have been over **80,000 visits** to the website since its launch December 2003

Satisfaction with Services

Pie chart: Yes 89%, Missing 9%, No 3%
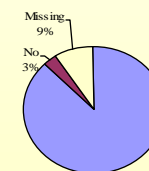
"Would you recommend RAC services to others?" (n=66)