Final Summary Report
IPS Impacting Tennessee: Urban-Rural Employment Gap Panel
July 30, 2021

Panelists:
Ann Berry, UT Institute of Agriculture
Brooxie Carlton, TN Dept. of Economic and Community Development
Tim Ezzell, UT Institute for a Secure and Sustainable Environment
Matt Harris, UT Boyd Center for Business and Economic Research
David Hughes, UT Institute of Agriculture
Matt Largen, Williamson Inc.
Greg Lowe, City of Lewisburg Economic Development
Matt Murray, UT Baker Center for Public Policy
Amy New, Cookeville-Putnam County Chamber of Commerce
Jody Sliger, TN Dept. of Economic and Community Development
Shelby Spurgeon, Weakly County Economic Development
Sreedhar Upendram, UT Institute of Agriculture
Marianne Wanamaker, UT Boyd Center for Business and Economic Research

Facilitators: Beth Phillips and Kaley Walker

Results of Two Panel Meetings:
May 11: Panel discussion focused on defining the Urban-Rural Employment Gap topic. The panel identified many issues that impact the Gap, and suggested a focus on structural barriers to entering the labor force.
May 18: Panel discussion focused around what would be of help to IPS in working with our customers.

Panel Outcomes
A. The panel identified 11 broad topics related to the Urban-Rural Employment Gap issue:
   - Childcare
   - Transportation Assistance Programs
   - Healthcare Accessibility
   - Education <-> Employer Connections
   - Broadband Expansion
   - Automation
   - Workforce Development/Pipeline
   - Leadership Capacity
   - Fostering Entrepreneurship
   - Awareness of Economic Trends and Opportunities
   - Environmental, Social, and Governance Policies for Business Recruitment

B. The panel suggested an approach (or map) that could be taken by IPS and collaborative parties to provide support to IPS customers with some or all of these topic areas. The panel also identified areas in which it could assist IPS in this mapping approach, including providing data, sharing existing research, best practices, and case studies that are relevant to these issues, and offering experts for IPS to consult in developing this map further. The panel’s suggested approach includes these five elements:
1. **Define the specific problem of immediate concern:** Provide and/or help customers collect local market data and perform a needs assessment.

2. **Identify Resources:** Perform a market map of the existing players and resources in the state to address related issues.

3. **Identify Best Practices and Case Studies:** Share existing best practices and case studies for addressing the problem.

4. **Assist Customers with Identifying and Accessing Resources:** Direct customers to funding, technical assistance, and other resources to help build solutions.

5. **Build and Map Expertise:** Maintain a list of UT-affiliated personnel who may be contacted for additional help on relevant subject areas.

C. Panelists were asked to **provide any additional research, data, best practice examples, or other relevant information** that could be of help to IPS in working with customers and exploring these issues further. That information was stored in the Google Drive site created for Impacting Tennessee.