



The Rural Policy Forum is an annual conference, held in the first part of August in various locations around the state. Host communities should consider the following as a guideline to determine if a community is qualified to host.

Must have at least 6 hotels/inns offer special pricing for attendees. Ideally, there would be half of these as local inns and half as national brands. Price points should range from \$80-\$110 for up to 2 nights for as many as 100 rooms. These hotels should be considered partners. Their logos, contacts and pricing will be on the website and all staff should be informed about special pricing for the Rural Policy Forum. Additionally, during the conference, they should be prepared to answer questions about locations for the conference and evening gatherings, etc. The Rural Development Council relies on a local partner to manage these lodging relationships.

Must have at least 2 and preferably 4 restaurants that can cater four meals for 250-300 people. Budget is \$8 for breakfast and \$10 for lunch per person inclusive of tax. Plus gratuity on top. An all-day beverage station is also needed for another \$5 per person for coffee, tea, and water. These restaurants must have their own warming stations, and be willing to send at least 2 servers for two buffet lines. Their logos and contact information will be included on the website and they will be given plenty of shout-outs from the stage. Additionally, the Rural Development Council and Local First Arizona will continue to promote them at other times during the year.

Must have one conference room to hold 275-300 people plus at least 3 break out rooms that hold 75 people each adjacent or right nearby. These rooms would ideally be in the same building, but could work if only a short walk away i.e between nearby buildings on a campus. Attendees should not have to walk far or drive to another location to attend any session.

There must be parking for at least 75 cars at the event location.

Site should have a dedicated steering committee of 3-5 people who can create and assemble 60 gifts for speakers (these should be something inexpensive that is artistic and represents that area). The committee will also manage relationships with businesses in the area, including lodging, restaurants, and entertainment for attendees.

The steering committee should plan to host an event on the Wednesday evening to launch the Rural Policy Forum- this event should include either a sit down dinner for 150-175 people or a casual mixer with very heavy appetizers located at a great site to feature that town and set the stage for a great conference. Budget for this is negotiable to be added as an optional cost for attendees. Our experience suggests \$20 including tax and tip for food and wine sampling plus a cash bar for full drinks works best. Pricing could go up to \$25 depending on event. The Rural Development Council manages ticketing, marketing, and payment to all vendors and can assist with donated alcohol. Suggest one food partner to decide on the menu and collect ticket revenue, rather than splitting with multiple hospitality groups. We leave the final decision to the locals of course.

Host site should also have a great attraction for a Thursday night event where the group can gather over dinner. Prefer a large room for 175, with tables of 8 for mealtime. Suggested price is \$25 per person, including tax and tip. Can be a buffet or plated meal. Steering committee should plan on entertainment.

Key to getting folks to travel Wednesday and select a two-night stay is to do a really great economic development tour on Wednesday that starts at noon. Paired with the awesome dinner time mixer, we believe this sells about an extra 90 rooms on Wednesday night. The committee should make recommendations and connections for tour stop hosts.

In the last four years, we have worked in each host community to make this economic development tour with a box lunch from a local restaurant for \$10 per person. The tour needs a bus and at least 5 notable stops that are informative and fun, showcasing the unique businesses in the area. Manufacturing, agriculture, mining, transportation, or other types of businesses that make great, interesting tours are welcome. The steering

committee can help decide locations. We should be able to complete the tour in no more than 5 hours inclusive of travel.

For communities that are interested, please send the following to Kimber@localfirstaz.com:

Average temperature of weather the first two weeks of August

A list of hotels you believe would support and their price range

A list of restaurants you believe would support, considering the price points outlined above and the food you want to showcase your region

Suggested host location- photo, room size, A/V specs, and available tables and chairs, size and number of breakout rooms and photos if possible.

At least two recommended evening event/party locations and description of suggested event

At least 5 recommended stops to feature the region on an economic development tour. (What would make it fun?)

A list of people who would serve on the steering committee

Contact for main organizing partner- who is the point person?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST!