

# USDA Rural Health Liaison

The USDA Rural Health Liaison (RHL) position was created by Congress in the 2018 Farm Bill to enhance USDA's efforts to support rural health. USDA RHL Kellie Kubena cultivates relationships across USDA, with other federal agencies, and with external partners to gather information and resources to promote department-wide efforts to address rural America's health care needs.

## FOUR WAYS THE RHL SUPPORTED RURAL HEALTH IN 2024



**Facilitated the development and coordination of tools and shared resources to support rural communities.**

- Nearly 160 USDA rural health programs in the Rural Health Program Index, available at this link: [tinyurl.com/RD-RHIndex](https://tinyurl.com/RD-RHIndex)
- National Rural Health Day events (2023 NRHD Webinar – available at this YouTube video link: [tinyurl.com/RD-NRHDWeb](https://tinyurl.com/RD-NRHDWeb))
- Mental health awareness events (2024 Mental Health Awareness Webinar – available at this YouTube video link: [tinyurl.com/RD-MHAWeb](https://tinyurl.com/RD-MHAWeb))
- HHS-USDA Joint Rural Child Care Resource Guide – available at this link: [tinyurl.com/RD-Childcare](https://tinyurl.com/RD-Childcare) - PDF
- FY24 Mental Health Fact Sheet available at [tinyurl.com/RDMentalHealth](https://tinyurl.com/RDMentalHealth)
- FY24 Rural Health Infographic available at [tinyurl.com/RuralHealthInfog](https://tinyurl.com/RuralHealthInfog)
- Rural Health Success Stories available at [tinyurl.com/HealthSuccesses](https://tinyurl.com/HealthSuccesses)



**Participated in interagency working groups to develop health-related strategies and policies. Results include:**

- National Strategy for Suicide Prevention and Federal Action Plan – available at this link: [tinyurl.com/USDA-HHS-prev](https://tinyurl.com/USDA-HHS-prev). We coordinated across USDA's agencies and mission areas to identify more than 20 action items to promote suicide prevention activities.
- Federal Food Is Medicine Toolkit – available at this link: [tinyurl.com/ODPHP-food](https://tinyurl.com/ODPHP-food)
- FEMA National Resilience Guidance – available at this link: [tinyurl.com/FEMA-resilience](https://tinyurl.com/FEMA-resilience)



**Collaborated with over 40 partners and made more than 50 new connections to promote health advocacy and equity in rural America.**

**Collaborations:**

Federal partners focused on:

- Health care availability
- Economic development
- Justice
- Social determinants of health
- Maternal health
- Mental health and suicide prevention
- Substance use disorders

Non-federal partners such as:

- Nonprofit and philanthropic organizations
- Academic institutions and technical assistance providers
- Health-focused associations
- Industry

**New Connections:**

Federal partners focused on:

- Health care cybersecurity
- Housing and homelessness
- Food security
- Workforce development
- Electronic medical records
- Transportation
- Infectious and chronic disease

Non-federal partners included:

- Private companies
- Health care facilities
- Farmer and rancher health
- Academic and research institutions
- State agriculture and health departments
- Youth and educational organizations
- Health care providers



**Assisted with rural health outreach, including supporting presentations and finding the right subject matter experts.**

The RHL supported more than 20 speaking engagements at federal, national, regional, and state levels, covering health topics such as:

- Rural mental health and farm stress
- Rural community economic development
- Food and nutrition security
- Rural health care, telemedicine, health equity, and public health
- National Rural Health Day commemoration webinars
- Rural maternal health
- Social determinants and health, and USDA-RD programs
- Youth health and mental Health
- USDA-RD and partnerships to improve rural health
- USDA-RD Emergency Rural Health Care (ERHC) Grant Track 1 analysis of equitable distribution



Rural Health Website