

## ERS Peer Review Plan

Preliminary Title: Federal Assistance and Rural Hospital Closings: The Impact of USDA Community Facilities Program

Type of Report  
(ERR, EIB, EB) ERR

☒ Influential Scientific Information

Agency: Economic Research Service ☐ Highly Influential Scientific Assessment  
USDA

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Subject of Review: The issue of rural hospital closings in the United States has been a major concern for policymakers, community development practitioners, and rural residents. The chart below shows that since 2005, the rural hospital closure crisis has claimed 174 hospitals across the nation, culminating in 2020 with 16 closures. Rural hospitals in the U.S. face severe financial stress due to several unique conditions, compared to their urban counterparts. Based on the profit or loss calculated using health care services delivered to patients, the margin for urban hospitals was significantly higher (8.2 percent) than that of rural hospitals (0.19 percent) for hospitals that were operating in 2022. The federal government, through various agencies, administers multiple policies and programs that provide financial support for rural hospitals. The Community Facilities (CF) Program administered by the USDA Rural Development (USDA-RD) is one of the major federal programs that provides such financial assistance to rural hospitals. Despite the large size of CF investments and length of the time the program has been active, there is hardly any published study that has investigated the effectiveness of this program. The objective of the present study is to investigate the impact of the CF Program on rural hospital closures.

Purpose of Review: The purpose of the review is to ensure the high-quality of the economic analysis, transparent explanation of methods, objective interpretation of results, and effective communication to the intended audience.

Type of Review: ☐ Panel Review ☒ Individual Reviewers

☐ Alternative Process (Briefly Explain):

Timing of Review (Est.): Start: 10/26/2023 Completed: ---

Number of Reviewers: ☐ 3 or fewer ☒ 4 to 10 ☐ More than 10

Primary Disciplines/Types of Expertise Needed for Review: Economists

Reviewers selected by: ☒ Agency ☐ Designated Outside Organization

[X] No

How:

When:

[X] No

[X] No