

# Narrowing the Urban-Rural Divide: Methods for Small Towns to Succeed

Small cities, towns, and villages must meet rising demands with limited resources. Leveraging the right data can change the game for strategic planning and budgeting success. In this course, you'll learn how to identify gaps and strengths in community livability, and allocate resources based on evidence. This workshop will focus on innovative methods that rural communities can use to assess and take actions to create opportunities where rural America not only exists but also prospers.

(Practice Groups 7. Strategic Planning 12 Financial Management and Budgeting)

## Learning Objectives:

- Learn the top current and predicted trends of local governments and understand the areas of community livability critical for the success of rural communities
- Understand how to use the strengths of rural communities to mitigate upcoming challenges and how small governments turn big data into successful community decisions, without adding undue burden on staff
- Discuss with peers the strengths and assets smaller jurisdictions can use to help leverage gains and bridge the gaps for your communities and identify funding streams to build rural economies

PRESENTERS:



Michelle Kobayashi is a thought-leader in the field of survey research and evaluation and has written numerous books and articles on the subject. As a community survey expert with experience working in local government, she travels the country to speak professionally and lead workshops about resident surveys, performance measurement, strategic planning and more. Kobayashi has lead the innovation efforts of National Research Center for nearly 30 years, and keeps Polco / NRC at the cutting edge of the survey industry.



Tobin McKearin is a strategic and people-focused leader, complex problem solver, economist, and combat pilot. He is a Career Air Force Officer with extensive leadership experience in data analysis, risk management, project management, and process improvement. Tobin has over 20 years of experience in risk management, risk mitigation, and regulatory compliance and over 12 years in predictive modeling, statistical forecasting, and data analysis where he has played roles as an individual and as a team lead.

Tobin has a bachelor's degree in economics and Operations Research from the United States Air Force Academy, Masters in Economics from the University of Hawaii, and a PhD in Economics from the University of Texas.

TARGET AUDIENCES:

Assistants/Deputies,

Chief Executive Officers, County Leaders, Early-Career Professionals, Department

Heads/Directors, Mid-Level Managers, Senior/Credentialed Managers, Small Community Leaders,

Staff Analysts/Assistants