

Consulting Wisely

Randall Longenecker and members of Rural Residency Consultant Learning Community (RRCLC)
The RTT Collaborative Annual Meeting
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There are many options to consider when looking for advice and assistance in developing a new program or problem-solving in an established program. Participants in this learning community over the past year and a half will engage the audience regarding the choice, manner, and timing of a formal consultation in the design, development, or implementation of a rural residency program. A consult can provide outside validation for plans already in progress. A formal consult provides a good reason to convene stakeholders.

Results of World Café: April 27, 2023

“The best time to seek consultation is before you need it! ...before things are really on fire!”
“If you think you need one, it is probably past time”
“There is no bad time”
“Create a network and ask questions”
“When there is a critical mass” (What is a critical mass?)
“Ask three people at three stages: before, during, and after” successful program startup
“(consider) ‘consultation light’”

Tips:

- Establish a ‘primary care’ consultant you can trust (see attached listing of residency consulting groups with particular expertise in rural)
- Consult early and often – before you ‘need’ it; when you don’t know what you don’t know
- In a manner that fits the stage (frequent small consultations may be better than one big one:
 - Exploration (diagnostic consultation; under ‘consideration; upon establishing a core leadership group of 2 to 3; find out what you don’t know; first online)
 - On initial design, when starting the application for accreditation (design consultation)
 - Preparation for implementation – Upon accreditation and financial go ahead
- If you wait till you ‘need’ it (disagreements among local leaders, when you’re ‘stuck’) or when the money’s available, it may be too late
- Join an ‘informed’ peer network
- Like in much of life, the sticker price does not reflect quality
- Ask peers who have gone this way before, and take each bit of counsel with a grain of salt
- Remember that rural is different than urban, both because of a relatively resource limited environment, nuances around GME funding, and particular challenges around governance
- Probably get more than one...

Be prepared to answer these 4 questions:

- Why are you seeking this consultation?
- What key questions would you like to have answered?
- What do you expect as deliverables?
- What is the time frame for this work?

These questions are generally reflected (in a more close-ended fashion) in the Professional Services Request The RTT Collaborative asks the individual requestor to complete – a Qualtrics form linked from our assistance page:

<https://rttcollaborative.net/about/tools-and-assistance/>

References:

Hawes EM, Weidner A, Page C, Longenecker R, Pauwels J, Crane S, Chen F, Fraher E. A Roadmap to Rural Residency Program Development, *Journal of Graduate Medical Education* August 2020;12(4):384-7.

<https://meridian.allenpress.com/jgme/article/12/4/384/445472/A-Roadmap-to-Rural-Residency-Program-Development>