

Call for Applications: Rural Sociology Editor

Applications Due: January 15, 2027

Editorial Term: January 1, 2028-December 31, 2030

The Rural Sociological Society invites applications for the next Editor(s) of *Rural Sociology*. Applications may be from a single candidate or multiple candidates who would serve as co-editors. Multiple candidates could be from a single institution or multiple institutions, including non-academic institutions, as long as candidates have a university affiliation. Applications are due January 15, 2027.

Published since 1937, *Rural Sociology* reaches an international audience of social scientists, policy makers, and agency professionals concerned with rural people, places, and problems. A forum for cutting-edge research, *Rural Sociology* explores sociological and innovative interdisciplinary approaches to emerging and recurring social issues affecting rural people and places. The journal is particularly interested in advancing sociological theory and welcomes the use of a wide range of social science methodologies. Manuscripts that use a sociological perspective to address the effects of local and global systems on rural people and places, rural community revitalization, rural demographic changes, rural poverty, natural resource allocations, the environment, food and agricultural systems, and related topics from all regions of the world are welcome. *Rural Sociology* also accepts papers that significantly advance the measurement of key sociological concepts or provide well-documented critical analysis of one or more theories as these measures and analyses are related to rural sociology.

Rural Sociology currently publishes three article types: Research Articles, Research Notes, and Book Reviews. Articles are published online in four issues per year, but appear as Early Access on a rolling basis. Special issues are also possible. The journal received nearly 350 submissions in 2025.

Editorial Term and Editor Transition Timeline

The new Editor(s) will be appointed during RSS's Mid-year Council Meeting in February 2027. The new Editor(s) will shadow the current Editors during August 1-December 31, 2027 and will assume full responsibility as Editor(s) beginning January 1, 2028 and ending December 31, 2030.

Responsibilities

Editors of *Rural Sociology* occupy a particularly prominent leadership position in the field. In naming editorial boards, selecting reviewers for manuscripts, and making final publication decisions (among other duties), they make a vitally important contribution to the discipline, and they play a key role in maintaining the highest standards of integrity and scholarly inquiry.

Specific responsibilities include:

Strategic and Editorial Direction

- Set and periodically revisit the journal's scope, mission, and priorities.

- Solicit special issues, symposia, or themed sections.
- Recruit and manage the Associate Editors and Book Review Editor.
- Track and respond to journal metrics (impact factor, submission volume, time-to-decision, acceptance rate).
- Represent the journal at the RSS Annual Meeting and allied conferences.
- Liaise with the publisher on production, indexing, and distribution issues.

Administrative

- Manage the journal's editorial management system.
- Prepare an annual editor's report for RSS Council, which should include at a minimum information about trends in journal impact factor, submission volume, time-to-decision, acceptance rate, and downloads.
- Coordinate the transition to the next editor at the end of the editorial term.

Manuscript Handling

- Conduct initial screening of submissions for fit, scope, and basic quality standards (desk rejecting when appropriate).
- Assign manuscripts to appropriate Associate Editors or reviewers based on expertise.
- Monitor review timelines and send reminders to ensure timely turnaround.
- Assess potential conflicts of interest among reviewers, editors, and authors.
- Synthesize reviewer feedback into a coherent decision letter.
- Manage revise-and-resubmit cycles, tracking whether authors adequately addressed critiques.
- Make final editorial decisions.

Reviewer and Author Relations

- Build and maintain a reliable, diverse pool of peer reviewers.
- Provide guidance or calibration to reviewers to ensure consistent standards.
- Communicate decisions clearly and constructively, including to authors receiving rejections.
- Mentor early-career scholars through the review and publication process.
- Acknowledge reviewer service (e.g., annual reviewer thank-you lists).

Quality and Integrity

- Uphold methodological and substantive rigor standards for the field.
- Screen for plagiarism, data fabrication, duplicate publication, and other research misconduct.
- Enforce disclosure of funding sources, conflicts of interest, and IRB/ethics approvals.
- Adjudicate authorship disputes or complaints when they arise.

Eligibility

Editors must be RSS members and maintain membership through their editorial term. They must hold a tenured or equivalent position in an academic or non-academic setting.

Selection Criteria

The Publication Committee will review applications and make a recommendation to the RSS Council. In accordance with the Society's mission to publish high quality scholarship, the following criteria will be considered in selecting editors for *Rural Sociology*:

1. Evidence of an established record of scholarship;
2. Evidence of an understanding of the mission of the journal and its operation, indicated by experience with the journal across any of a wide variety of activities (submission, reviewing, editorial board experience, and publication in the journal);
3. Openness to different methods, theories, and approaches to rural sociology;
4. Evidence of a record of responsible service to scholarly publishing;
5. Evidence of organizational skills and intellectual leadership;
6. A satisfactory budget proposal demonstrating efficient use of available RSS resources as well as institutional support as appropriate, along with commitment to cost-effective operation of the editor's office and responsibilities.

Preparing the Application Packet

To apply, candidates must submit the following in a single PDF attached to an email (subject line: Rural Sociology Editor Application) addressed to the RSS Executive Director (Suzanne Bevan, sbevan@ruralsociology.org) and Publications Committee Chair (David Peters, dpeters@iastate.edu) by January 15, 2027:

1. A **Vision Statement** (no longer than one page): Summarize your goals and plans for the content of *Rural Sociology*. It should reflect an understanding of the journal's mission and may include an assessment of the current strengths and/or gaps that you plan to address and how this plan will be operationalized.
2. **Background and Qualifications** (no longer than one page): Describe your research interests and expertise and prior editorial, journal review, and administrative experience relevant to this role.
3. **Editorial Office Structure**: Provide a clear description of and justification for the structure of the proposed editorial office and responsibilities. For example, will you use a Managing Editor? If there will be co-editors, how will you distribute responsibilities? If Editors are from different institutions, how will you handle administration? How many Associate Editors will you recruit? What criteria will you use to select Associate Editors, and how many manuscripts will they each handle? [Do not include the names of individuals who you would like to include as Associate Editors. Contacting potential Associate Editors should be done only after an Editor has been selected.]
4. **Institutional Support and Capacity**: It is important for applicants to consider and address the feasibility of serving as Editor in light of the resources RSS can provide and those likely to be available at the Editor's institution. Describe your institutional support and capacity. Identify your dedicated FTE and how your institution is prepared to support your editorship (financial and/or in-kind). Include a letter of support from your Dean or other appropriate institutional official with the application.
5. **Proposed Annual Budget**: Provide a proposed annual budget **up to \$35,000** showing how you will allocate RSS funds. Also identify additional available institutional support (including in-kind support). Indirect costs are not allowed in the RSS budget.
6. **Curriculum Vitae(s)**