The Rural First Initiative, Urban Taskforce, and Tribal Area

Empowering Local Voices Across Texas

The *Rural First Initiative, Urban Taskforce, and Tribal Area* is a bold statewide outreach effort dedicated to listening, learning, and empowering Texans in rural, urban, and tribal communities.

We travel county by county, setting up mobile teams to host conversations, build relationships, and offer support at the local level. Our focus is simple but powerful: go where the people are, listen to their stories, and help amplify their voices.

What We Do:

- Engage local residents through facilitated sessions called Fireside Chats
- Establish presence in each county using local volunteers and contacts
- Document concerns and ideas to support local planning and community solutions

How It Works:

We operate from mobile trailers or temporary spaces equipped with Wi-Fi, printers, and trained facilitators. Each visit is brief but meaningful, creating a lasting impact by involving the community in their own growth and advocacy.

Long-Term Vision:

To build a network of local teams trained to run these sessions independently, ensuring that conversations continue long after we leave.

"We're not here to speak for the people. We're here to make sure the people are heard."

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Fireside Chats – Conversations That Matter

Real Talk. Real People. Real Change.

A Fireside Chat is a community-centered conversation hosted in your county—where local people gather to speak freely about their concerns, hopes, and ideas. It's not a speech, it's a session where everyone gets a voice.

How It Works:

1. We set up in your area (community center, library, parking lot, etc.)
2. Everyone is invited to attend—no agenda, no politics
3. Trained hosts guide the conversation so everyone is heard
4. Notes and recordings are captured to create a record of community input

What Makes It Powerful:

- No barriers to entry – anyone can speak
- Locally focused – not a top-down program
- Actionable results – insights are shared with local leaders

Estimated Cost:

This is a low-cost, high-impact way to elevate local needs and connect neighbors. Only $500 per event, which covers:

- Local advertising (radio, flyers, social media)
- Temporary space rental (if needed)
- Equipment and staffing (hot spot, printer, documentation)

"A fireside is more than warmth. It's where people speak from the heart."

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Train the Trainer – Building Local Teams for Change

Empowering Local Leaders, One County at a Time

The success of this initiative depends on community ownership. That's why we've designed a Train-the-Trainer program—so local residents can take the lead in hosting Fireside Chats in their own communities.

Each county's session is led by a three-person team:

The Fireside Team Roles:

- **The Host** – Guides the discussion, ensures respect and equal participation
- **The Recorder** – Takes detailed notes, tracks attendance, and records ideas
- **The Alternate** – Supports both roles and steps in as needed

How We Train:

Our mobile team mentors locals by:

- Demonstrating a live session
- Explaining best practices
- Providing a written guide and support materials
- Preparing local leaders to replicate the process independently

This structure ensures that once we leave a county, the community can continue on its own.

Why It Matters:

- Builds local leadership capacity
- Ensures continuity after our visit
- Empowers voices from within the community

"You don't need permission to lead—just a process. This is it."

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