

Deborah M. Markley, PhD

Managing Director

Deborah M. Markley is Co-founder and Managing Director of the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, a national non-profit organization. The Center helps communities leverage assets, primarily their business, social and civic entrepreneurs, for a more prosperous future. We work in partnership with communities to provide research-based, asset-focused comprehensive and customized entrepreneurial development assistance. Deb brings over 30 years of experience in community economic development. Before founding the Center, she held academic positions and operated her own consulting practice. Her field-based research has been presented in academic journals, as well as to national public policy organizations and Congressional committees.

Deb's role within the Center is helping communities – and the Center – measure the impact of their work and tell the story of their success. She leads the Center's empowering research efforts including practice-driven assessment of best models for entrepreneurship development. Her research includes case studies of entrepreneurial support organizations and assessment of rural ecosystems, including capital markets. She has extensive experience conducting field-based survey research including focus groups and interviews with rural bankers, entrepreneurs, service providers, investors, small manufacturers, and others. In addition to her research efforts, Deb works as part of the Center's Community Development Philanthropy and New Generation Partnerships solution area teams.

Deb has a B.A. and M.S. in Agricultural Economies from Cornell University and a Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from Virginia Tech. She and her husband, Bob, Managing Director for International Development at Duke University, live in Chatham County North Carolina. They have three grown children.

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