# 1.4 Working with Rural Transportation Planning Organizations

**Purpose:** This resource briefly describes Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs)

**Directions:** Network members in rural areas may be able to obtain services and support from an RPO or state DOT similar to those provided by MPOs.

1. **Identify appropriate planning entity.** Institutional arrangements and transportation issues can be more difficult in rural areas than in metropolitan areas. In small communities, no one official entity (such as an MPO) is designated as a planning organization. In some states, the state DOT conducts planning for these areas, while in other states, RPOs or local governments do so. RPOs are often housed within regional planning commissions, councils of governments, or regional development organizations.
2. **Get involved.** RPOs are voluntary regional transportation planning entities. They often work with state and local officials to:
   1. Identify and set priorities on transportation project needs on a regional basis,
   2. Provide technical assistance to local officials, and
   3. Assist state transportation officials with public outreach and coordination.