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Deborah M. Markley is Managing Director and Director of Research for the Rural Policy Research Institute's Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, a national research and policy center. Her focus within the Center is practice-driven research and evaluation of best models for entrepreneurship development in rural places. Prior to her work with the Center, she was the Chair of the Rural Policy Research Institute's Equity Capital Initiative and completed a national study of nontraditional venture capital institutions. Her research has also included case studies of entrepreneurial support organizations, evaluation of state industrial extension programs, and consideration of the impacts of changing banking markets on small business finance. She has extensive experience conducting field-based survey research projects and has conducted focus groups and interviews with rural bankers, entrepreneurs, business service providers, venture capitalists, small manufacturers, and others. Her research has been presented in academic journals, as well as to national public policy organizations and Congressional committees.

Dr. Markley received her PhD. in agricultural economics from Virginia Tech in 1984 and has held faculty and research positions at the University of Tennessee, the University of Massachusetts, and Purdue University.