

Developing GIS in Rural Planning Agencies:
A Cooperative Project Among Five Regional Planning Councils and
The Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, 1995-1997

A Thesis

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Abstract

This thesis describes and evaluates the efforts of the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs (IIRA) to develop Geographic Information Systems (GIS) within four regional planning councils in Illinois.

It first describes how the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs initiated a project to assist four regional planning councils to develop GIS technology, then describes where and how funding was obtained. The study then provides details of the steps taken to provide training, data and technical support to those agencies participating in this project.

Finally, the study evaluates the accomplishments and makes recommendations for the future of this project.

Through the evaluation of this project, it has been determined that many obstacles exist in training GIS to regional planning councils and that traditional training methods must be modified to meet the needs of regional planning councils. However, once the problems are recognized and dealt with, then progress was quickly made. All of the regional planning councils expressed a desire to continue with this project.