

Lorette Picciano has served as Executive Director of the Rural Coalition/Coalición Rural, a Washington, DC-based alliance of more than 70 culturally diverse community based organizations representing small producers and farmworkers in the US and Mexico, since 1992. She works with the RC's diverse Board and members to promote just and sustainable development in rural areas and participated in her 7th Farm Bill Debate. RC has for more than 30 years been a leading organization working to secure civil and human rights in the agriculture and trade sectors, and especially in the movement to secure equity for all farmers and farmworkers from the US Department of Agriculture. Rural Coalition also connects with its sister communities in North America and globally, and is a member organization of the international farmers movement, La Via Campesina.

In the 2008 Farm Bill debate, she coordinated Farm and Food Policy Diversity Initiative, a collaboration of almost a dozen organizations representing socially disadvantaged producers and farmworkers in a unified effort to assure equal access to the programs of the US Department of Agriculture for farmers, ranchers, and farmworkers. As a result the initiative, more than 30 sections of new policy were included in the farm bill to benefit socially disadvantaged producers. She also works with member groups to prepare comments on rules to implement farm and food policy. One success of RC's efforts was the approval of the pilot project to fund high tunnels as a conservation practice under the EQIP program.

During her years at the Rural Coalition, she has also led many collaborative projects with Rural Coalition leaders, including "Community Partners for Environmental Health" that focused on mitigating environmental injustices in rural and farmworker communities.

Her education includes a BS in Agriculture and Life Sciences from Cornell University, and an M. Ed. from the University of Hawaii, where she was a participant in the Food Institute of the East-West Center and did fieldwork in the rural Philippines. Prior to joining the Rural Coalition, she worked since 1980 in Washington DC with several interfaith organizations on equity in food and farm policy, food security and fair trade issues. She also serves on the Boards of Directors of Agriculture Missions, Inc., and the emerging Solidarity Economy Network.