

## STAKEHOLDER ANNOUNCEMENT

### **USDA Rural Development Seeks Input to Improve Access to Grants and Help More Communities Thrive**

#### *Improvements Will Make It Easier to Apply for, Receive and Use Funding*

**WASHINGTON, May 2, 2024** – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Under Secretary Dr. Basil Gooden today invited public input on a plan to make it easier for more people in rural areas to access grant funding that will strengthen their local economies, communities and quality of life.

Through the [Better Grants Better Service](#) initiative, USDA Rural Development is gathering and analyzing input from customers, agency staff and other stakeholders to streamline its more than 30 grant programs into a superior customer experience.

These programs provide people in rural and Tribal communities access to better housing, infrastructure and business opportunities.

The improvements will help lessen the burden on communities that may lack time, resources and staffing to submit successful applications.

This initiative underscores USDA's commitment to being transparent and inclusive in the design and delivery of its programs. The initiative's goal is to:

- Make it easier for people to apply for, receive and use grant funds.
- Make customer service more efficient and consistent.
- Enhance the overall experience for Rural Development grant applicants and recipients.

Customers and stakeholders can learn more information about the Better Grants Better Service initiative in a short video available in [English](#) or [Spanish](#).

The first two areas of focus will be equipment-only and technical assistance grants. To submit ideas for ways in which the agency can improve these grants, email [SM.RD.BetterGrants@usda.gov](mailto:SM.RD.BetterGrants@usda.gov) by May 31, 2024.

USDA Rural Development will use the feedback to develop recommendations to improve its grant programs for all customers.

Today's announcement also advances the agency's Creating Opportunities through Rural Engagement (CORE) initiative, which ensures all people and communities can access its programs and benefit from funded projects.

Through CORE, USDA uses data analysis to engage with underserved communities, identify opportunities for them, and document the resulting investments and support. Since it launched in

2021, CORE has engaged with more than 4,000 people and organizations in 639 disadvantaged communities, resulting in \$423 million in investments.

If you'd like to subscribe to updates on Better Grants Better Service, visit our [GovDelivery subscriber page](#).

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