

STAKEHOLDER ANNOUNCEMENT

USDA Invites Applications for Grants to Strengthen Rural Cooperatives That Serve Socially Disadvantaged Groups

WASHINGTON, April 3, 2024 – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Under Secretary Dr. Basil Gooden today announced that USDA is inviting applications for grants to strengthen rural cooperatives that serve and are made up of people who are part of socially disadvantaged groups in rural areas.

USDA is making the \$3 million in grants available under the [Socially Disadvantaged Groups Grant](#) program to help new and existing cooperatives strengthen their hands-on assistance, like leadership training and strategic planning, to small business owners and agricultural producers. This program is part of USDA's commitment to ensuring that people of all backgrounds have the resources they need to thrive.

Rural cooperatives and [Cooperative Development Centers](#) are eligible to apply for grants to provide assistance to rural small business owners and agricultural producers from socially disadvantaged groups. The maximum award is \$175,000.

USDA is particularly interested in applications that will advance Biden-Harris Administration priorities to:

- Reduce climate pollution and increase resilience to the impacts of climate change through economic support to rural communities.
- Ensure all rural residents have equitable access to Rural Development (RD) programs and benefits from RD-funded projects; and
- Help rural communities recover economically through more and better market opportunities and through improved infrastructure.

Additional information on these key priorities is available at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/priority-points>.

Electronic applications must be submitted to grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on June 3, 2024.

Interested applicants are encouraged to contact their local USDA Rural Development State Office well in advance of the application deadline to discuss their project and ask any questions about the program or the application process. Contact information for state offices can be found at <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>.

Additional information on how to apply is available on page 22979 of the April 3, 2024, Federal Register.

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