

STAKEHOLDER ANNOUNCEMENT

USDA Seeks Applications to Advance Equity and Expand Regional Economies in Distressed Rural Communities

WASHINGTON, Dec. 20, 2021 – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Under Secretary for Rural Development Xochitl Torres Small today announced the Department is accepting grant applications that will advance equity in rural America by creating new opportunities in distressed communities.

USDA is offering [priority points](#) to projects that advance key priorities under the Biden-Harris Administration to help communities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, advance equity and combat climate change. These extra points will increase the likelihood of funding for projects seeking to address these critical challenges in rural America.

The [Rural Innovation Stronger Economy \(RISE\)](#) grant program encourages a regional, innovation-driven approach to economic development by funding job accelerator partnerships in low-income rural communities. This includes communities that have been historically underserved, marginalized and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality.

RISE provides grants of up to \$2 million to consortiums of local governments, investors, industry, institutions of higher education, and other public and private entities in rural areas. The funding may be used to support innovation centers and job accelerator programs that improve the ability of distressed rural communities to create high-wage jobs, form new businesses, and identify and maximize local assets.

USDA encourages applications that serve the smallest communities with the lowest incomes.

The deadline to submit applications is 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, April 19, 2022. Applications must be submitted through [Grants.gov](#).

Potential applicants may submit a concept proposal for review by the agency to SM.USDA-RD.RISE@usda.gov no later than February 18, 2022.

For additional information, see page 71868 of the Dec. 20, 2021, [Federal Register](#).

Applicants are encouraged to contact their nearest USDA [Rural Development State Office](#) ahead of the application deadline for more information about the program or the application process.

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities and create jobs in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural areas. For more information, visit www.rd.usda.gov.

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