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# News Release

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## **USDA Partners to Improve Rural Water Infrastructure for Nearly 250,000 People in 103 Communities**

*Projects in 35 States Will Improve Quality of Life and Build a Foundation for Rural Prosperity*

GAINESVILLE, FL July 17, 2018 – Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development Anne Hazlett recently announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is investing \$267 million in 103 infrastructure [projects](#) to upgrade water and wastewater systems in rural communities.

“Every resident in Florida deserves modern, operating infrastructure,” said USDA Rural Development Florida/USVI State Director Sydney Gruters. “Under this Administration, Secretary Perdue is committed to ensuring that our rural communities thrive and continue to prosper.”

USDA is making investments in 35 states through the [Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant](#) program. The funds can be used to finance drinking water, storm water drainage and waste disposal systems for rural communities with 10,000 or fewer residents.

In the town of Eatonville, Florida, this Rural Development investment will be used to fund the Park Master Lift Station replacement project utilizing a \$203,000 Water and Waste Disposal loan in addition to a \$538,220 Water and Waste Disposal grant. The proposed project will replace the aging lift station with a new lift station that will provide the town with the ability to meet current and future wastewater needs and resolve serious infrastructure issues. Additional funding assistance for this project included a \$25,000 Rural Development SEARCH Grant.

In FY 2018, Congress provided a historic level of funding for water and wastewater infrastructure. The 2018 Omnibus spending bill includes \$5.2 billion for USDA loans and grants, up from \$1.2 billion in FY 2017. It also directs Agriculture Secretary Perdue to make investments in rural communities with the greatest infrastructure needs.

Rural community leaders can apply for these funds electronically by using the interactive [RD Apply](#) tool. They can also apply through one of USDA Rural Development’s [state or field offices](#).

In April 2017, President Donald J. Trump established the Interagency Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity to identify legislative, regulatory and policy changes that could promote agriculture and prosperity in rural communities. In January 2018, Secretary Perdue presented the Task Force's findings to President Trump. These findings included 31 recommendations to align the federal government with state, local and tribal governments to take advantage of opportunities that exist in rural America. Increasing investments in rural infrastructure is a key recommendation of the task force.

To view the report in its entirety, please view the [Report to the President of the United States from the Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity](#) (PDF, 5.4 MB). In addition, to view the categories of the recommendations, please view the [Rural Prosperity infographic](#) (PDF, 190 KB).

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 services such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural areas. For more information, visit [www.rd.usda.gov](http://www.rd.usda.gov).

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