



News Release

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USDA Invests in Rural Critical Community Facilities in Pasco County Florida

350 Students Will Benefit with Permanent Charter School and Help the Community Thrive in the Future

Gainesville, Florida Nov. 14, 2019 – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development State Director, Phil Leary, AICP today announced that the USDA has invested \$2,140,000 for Athenian Academy of Pasco County. USDA is making the investments through the [Community Facilities Direct Loan Program](#).

“Modern facilities for essential services such as schools, first responders, hospitals and health clinics are the bedrock to healthy and prosperous communities,” Leary said. “Under the leadership of President Trump and Agriculture Secretary Perdue, USDA is committed to be a strong partner in building and modernizing facilities and creating jobs and educational opportunities, because when rural America thrives, all of America thrives.”

The investment will be used to purchase the existing property currently being leased by Athenian Academy of Technology and the Arts Inc., a Fla. charter school. The school will acquire 7.48 acres of land with 15,664 square-feet of existing facilities along with an additional 4.8 acres that will be used for future traffic lane extensions, play fields and gardens. This purchase will provide for a permanent charter school location for the 350 students currently attending.

More than 100 types of projects are eligible for Community Facilities program funding. Eligible applicants include municipalities, public bodies, nonprofit organizations and federally recognized Native American tribes. Projects must be in rural areas with a population of 20,000 or less.

Interested parties should contact their USDA Rural Development [state office](#) for information about additional funding, application procedures and eligibility details. Also see the [Community Facilities Direct Loan Program Guidance Book for Applicants](#), a detailed overview of 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.

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 cornerstone 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).

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