



Remarks by Under Secretary Dallas Tonsager for Kidworks

June 7, 2012 • Meredith, New Hampshire

Good afternoon! It's wonderful to be here in Meredith with everyone; thanks to Jennifer Weeks, Executive Director of Kidworks, for having us here, thanks to staff members of Senator Shaheen's and Senator Ayotte's and everyone else for coming, and thanks to our State Director for New Hampshire and Vermont, Molly Lambert, who I know has been working hard along with her staff to make this happen.

This funding is **a one small, but important step** in the right direction for this community... and for our country as a whole, and I am so glad that I could be here to be part of it.

These days, economic growth, prosperity and quality jobs are on the mind of every citizen. And at USDA, we recognize how important it is **to increase the availability of capital** for community infrastructure investments. It's essential for small towns and rural areas to attract new businesses, to spur growth, and to create jobs.

Rural Development's Community Facilities Program plays a vital role in ensuring that rural communities can compete in today's economy by providing the tools and services necessary to attract and sustain economic growth.

Along with our entire suite of programs that include business and industry loans, housing loans, and infrastructure loans for things like broadband and water, our Community Facilities program is designed to make certain that young people growing up in rural places have a bright future where they can:

Secure a job in a vibrant rural community they can call home;



And remain in communities that have the safety, educational and healthcare services necessary to ensure a high quality of life.

USDA invests in rural America and the communities that millions call home by providing loans and grants for facilities and critical infrastructure that build thriving economies for the long term.

The Community Facilities Program supports essential infrastructure and services for public use in **rural areas of 20,000 people** or less. Financing for Community Facilities projects covers a broad range of interests, including healthcare, education, public safety, and public services.

Since the start of the Obama Administration, Rural Development's Community Facilities Program has helped nearly **30 million rural Americans address essential challenges** in health care, education, public service and public safety by financing projects through loans, grants, or loan guarantees.

Over that same period, Rural Development has helped finance more than:

- 580 health care projects, with loans and grants totaling *\$1.8 billion*
- 825 public service projects, with loans and grants totaling *\$679 million*
- 950 education projects, with loans and grants totaling *\$672 million*
- 2,190 public safety projects, with loans and grants totaling *\$458 million*

And right here in New Hampshire alone, we've invested over 14 million through our Community Facilities Program since 2009.



Just last week, we released a new report highlighting how our Community Facilities program creates jobs and boosts economic development. We also announced over \$45 million in new Community Facilities projects in 21 states.

It's great to see projects like the one we are announcing today here at Kidworks. Kidworks provides an essential service in Meredith, supplying quality care and learning opportunities for children anywhere from 6 weeks to 12 years. The Secretary and I fully support Kidwork's participation in the NH Childcare Assistance Program, which helps low-income families with the cost of child care. And through the **USDA Food Program**, it also provides a nutritious breakfast, lunch and snack to each and every child.

Funds from Rural Development and the **NH Community Development Finance Authority** will make significant improvements to the facility possible. Along with purchasing much-needed computers, equipment, and rubber mulch for the playground, they will also be able to replace the carpets and linoleum with vinyl flooring and install better insulation to reduce energy costs.

Loans like this one play a vital role in ensuring that rural communities can compete in today's economy by providing the tools and services for a healthy community of working parents and developing children that are necessary to attract economic growth in the short term—and to sustain it over the long-term.

At USDA, we recognize the importance of increasing the availability of capital for community facilities and infrastructure investments. All this is essential for small towns and rural areas to attract new businesses, spur growth and create jobs.

And so I want to thank you again for joining us all today to recognize yet another small, but important step in the right direction that we are making together with this project.