

News Briefs

Free Workshop

USDA Rural Development and the Washington State Department of Health and other partners will hold a free, all-day workshop, connecting Washington's rural safety-net providers and hospitals with federal, state, and private resources to learn about funding programs for technology investments, upgrades or replacement facilities, and to offer telehealth services to interested communities.

This workshop is for rural hospital leadership, staff, and board members, rural clinic managers, telehealth services leadership, rural radiology & other ancillary service managers, and any rural health care organization.

The workshops will be held on two days, one in both sides of the state:

Tuesday, September 13, 2016
Olympia, WA

Thursday, September 15, 2016
Cheney, WA

For more information please contact RuralEvents@doh.wa.gov

Washington State Rural Developments

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Washington State



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Rural Development Under Secretary Visits Washington

Last month we had the pleasure of hosting Lisa Mensah, Under Secretary for Rural Development, for a visit to Washington State. On August 25 and 26, she was here to announce funding to help eight tribal colleges across the country, including the Northwest Indian College (NWIC), located on the Lummi Indian Reservation in Whatcom County. The funding will be used to upgrade their infrastructure, purchase equipment and make other improvements to their educational facilities through USDA's Tribal College Initiative Grant program.

"Education is one of the best investments we can make in the future of rural America," Mensah said. "Tribal colleges are key resources for their communities and regions. Over the last seven years, USDA has worked closely with tribal leaders to support locally-driven solutions to improve economic opportunities in tribal areas by increasing access to education, health care, broadband and business development."

Specifically, NWIC is receiving a \$143,000 grant to renovate its 1931 Day School, a 5,000-square-foot building that holds great historical and cultural value to the Lummi Nation membership and Tribal elders.

The next day we visited with the Spokane Tribe of Indians, which was recently named by the Obama Administration as a Promise Zone, which are high poverty areas



Lisa Mensah, Under Secretary for Rural Development, and State Director Mario Villanueva, during a recent visit with the Spokane Tribe of Indians on August 26, 2016.

as in select urban, rural and tribal communities. The Federal Government will work strategically with Spokane Tribal leaders to boost economic activity and job growth, improve educational opportunities, reduce crime and leverage private investment to improve the quality of life in vulnerable areas.

"Coming home to the Pacific Northwest I was reminded again of the beauty of the land, the gentle spirit of the people and the rich history of native populations," said Mensah, a native of Portland, OR. "Rural Development has a powerful history of building the businesses, infrastructure and housing of rural America. What I witnessed in my brief time in Washington are the human stories--the faces and hands and all the lives we have touched behind our tremendous building record.

"Announcing the grants for tribal colleges inside the beautiful Northwest Indian College facility that we helped finance made very proud," she continued. "The hope and healing the college provides is a beautiful reminder of the critical role of lasting institutions.

"We witnessed the smoldering forests of the Spokane Tribe and thankfully the fires seem now under control," she added. I have no doubts that the tribe will rebuild and that in the Spokane region and throughout rural Washington Rural Development will be there."

Mario Villanueva

Washington State Director

GRH Funding Available

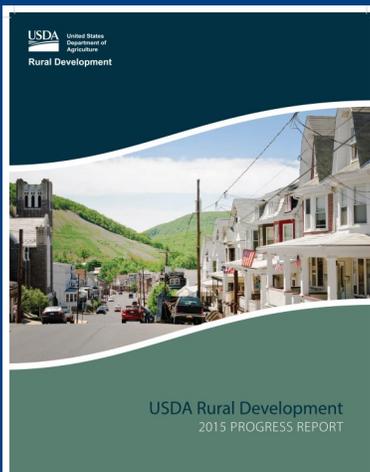
More than \$10 billion is available to guarantee no-down payment loans for rural customers through USDA Rural Development's Single Family Housing Guaranteed Program. Today's low interest rate environment, coupled with new program features such as the single-close construction loan and the streamlined-assist refinance option, makes this a great opportunity for rural Americans! Please visit our [SFH Guarantee website](#) for more information!

Upfront GRH Fees Reduced

On October 1, 2016, both the upfront guarantee fee and annual fee (collectively the "fee schedule") for purchase and refinance loans will decrease. USDA Rural Development is reducing the upfront guarantee fee from 2.75% to 1%, and the annual fee from .5% to .35%.

The Guaranteed Underwriting System (GUS) was updated August 31 to allow lenders to select and underwrite using either the FY16 or FY17 fee schedule. The determination will be based on the current processing timeframes in each state.

For more information, please call 360-704-7777 or email wa-grh@wa.usda.gov.



USDA Seeking Applications for CF Direct Relending Program

USDA Rural Development amended the Community Facility Direct Loan regulations to enable Rural Development to make loans to qualified Re-lenders who will loan those funds to applicants primarily for projects in or serving persistent poverty counties or high poverty areas that are eligible under the Community Facility Loan Program.

This program provides affordable funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas. Eligible borrowers include public bodies, community-based non-profit corporations, and Federally-recognized tribes.

Funds can be used to purchase, construct, improve essential community facilities, purchase equipment, and pay related project expenses. To apply for funds, USDA Rural Development must receive a complete application by 5 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on or before Sept. 30, 2016.

For more information, refer to the July 6, 2016 issue of the Federal Register (Vol. 81, No. 129) or contact Kristen Grifka by calling (202) 720-1504 or email her at kristen.grifka@wdc.usda.gov.

Multifamily Preservation and Revitalization (MPR) Program

USDA Rural Development will soon be seeking applications to participate in a demonstration program to preserve and revitalize existing Rural Rental Housing (RRH) projects under Section 515 Multi-Family Housing (MFH) loans and Sections 514/516 Off-Farm Labor Housing (FLH) loans.

Under this demonstration program, loans will be restructured to ensure sufficient resources are available to preserve the ability of rental projects to provide safe and affordable housing for very low-, low-, or moderate-income residents.

Projects participating in this program will be expected to be revitalized to extend their affordable use without displacing tenants because of increased rents.

USDA Rural Development will facilitate use of the Fiscal Year 2017 Multifamily Preservation and Revitalization (MPR) funding tools by holding a competitive application round for MPR applications requesting other MPR funding tools, in addition to the available MPR deferral assistance, and by adding a continuous open application process for any transfer applications that request only the MPR loan deferral assistance.

Application deadlines and contact will be available in the October issue of Washington Rural Developments. Queries can be directed to Mary Traxler, Multi-Family Housing Program Director in Washington State, by emailing her at mary.traxler@wa.usda.gov.

USDA REAP Loan Guarantee Available Year Around

USDA Rural Development's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) provides guaranteed loan financing year around to agricultural producers and rural small businesses to purchase or install renewable energy systems or to make energy efficiency improvements.

Agricultural producers with at least 50 percent of gross income coming from agricultural operations and small businesses may apply. Businesses must be in an area other than a city or town with a population of greater than 50,000 inhabitants and the

urbanized area of that city or town. Agricultural producers may be in rural or non-rural areas. Funds may be used for the purchase, installation and construction of renewable energy systems.

Additionally, the next deadline for requests of \$20,000 or less in grant funds is October 31, 2016.

For more information, please contact Randy Baird by calling (509) 454-5743 or email him at randy.baird@wa.usda.gov.