



Rural Cooperative Development Grants

What does this program do?

The primary objective of the RCDG program is to improve the economic condition of rural areas by assisting individuals and businesses in the startup, expansion or operational improvement of rural cooperatives and other mutually-owned businesses through Cooperative Development Centers. Grants are awarded through a national competition. Each fiscal year, applications are requested through a notice published in the **Federal Register** and through an announcement posted on **Grants.gov**.

How may funds be used?

Grant and matching funds can be used for operating a Rural Cooperative Development Center. Examples of work that the Centers can do are:

- Conducting feasibility studies
- Providing leadership and operational improvement training
- Developing business plans
- Facilitating strategic planning

Note that the Center can be located in any area, but the individuals and business assisted must be located in an eligible rural area.

How do we get started?

Before you apply:

- Request a **Data Universal Number System (DUNS)** number if your organization doesn't already have one. It should not take more than a few business days to get your number. However, you should plan on requesting it at least a month before the application deadline because you'll need that number for the next pre-application step (see below).
- Register your organization with the **System for Award Management (SAM)** if you aren't already registered. The registration is free, but you need to complete several steps. It's a good idea to start the registration process at least a month before any application deadline. Before you start

the registration process, we suggest reading through the HELP materials available on the SAM website. Then, you'll need to create an account. After you create your account by setting up a user id and password, you can register your organization. Remember, you'll need your DUNS number to complete your registration. Also, make a note of your Commercial And Government Entity (CAGE) code and expiration date because you'll need those for your application.

Who can answer questions?

If you have questions, you can contact your nearest Rural Development Office at www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/stateoffices.

NOTE: Because citations and other information may be subject to change please always consult the program instructions listed in the section above titled "What Law Governs this Program?" You may also contact **your local office** for assistance. You will find additional forms, resources, and program information at www.rd.usda.gov. *USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.*