Intermediary Relending Program

Fiscal Year 2026
Notice of Funding Opportunity

Funding Opportunity Number: RD-RBCS-IRP-2026

Publication Date: June 15, 2026

Application Due Date: 4:30 p.m. (local time) on

First Quarter-September 30, 2025,

Second Quarter- December 31, 2025,

Third Quarter- March 31, 2026,

Fourth Quarter- June 30, 2026.

Victoria Collin

Digitally signed by Victoria Collin
Date: 2026.06.11 01:37:00 -04'00'

Victoria Collin
Acting Administrator
Rural Business Cooperative Service
USDA Rural Development

PROGRAM SOLICITATION INFORMATION

Funding Opportunity Title: Intermediary Relending Program (IRP)

Funding Opportunity Number: RD-RBCS-IRP-2026

Announcement Type: Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Assistance Listing Number: 10.767

Dates: The deadlines for completed applications to be received in the USDA RD State Office for quarterly funding competitions is no later than 4:30 p.m. (local time) on: First Quarter-September 30, 2025, Second Quarter- December 31, 2025, Third Quarter- March 31, 2026, and Fourth Quarter- June 30, 2026.

Executive Summary:

The Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBCS or Agency), a Rural Development (RD) agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), invites applications under the Intermediary Relending Program (IRP) for fiscal year (FY) 2026. This Notice is being issued to allow applicants sufficient time to leverage financing, prepare and submit their applications, and give the Agency time to process program applications within FY 2026. Funding for FY 2026 is $9,000,000. Successful applications will be selected by the Agency for funding and subsequently awarded. All applicants are responsible for any expenses incurred in developing their application.

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1.0 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1.1 Rural Business Cooperative Service (RBCS) Key Priorities

The Agency encourages applicants to consider projects that will advance RBCS's Key Priorities including strengthening program integrity including the prevention and reduction of fraud, waste, and abuse.

1.2 Purpose of the Program

This program provides low-interest loans to local lenders (intermediaries) who then relend to businesses to help improve economic conditions and create jobs in rural communities. This purpose is achieved through the loans made to intermediaries that establish a revolving loan fund for the purpose of providing loans to ultimate recipients to promote community development, establish new businesses, establish and support microlending programs, and create or retain employment opportunities in rural areas. All applicable program requirements in their entirety can be found at 7 CFR part 4274, subpart D.

1.3 Statutory and Regulatory Authority

This program is authorized under Section 310H of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1936b) and is administered through regulations at 7 CFR part 4274, subpart D.

The Continuing Appropriations, Agriculture, Legislative Branch, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Extensions Act, 2026 (P.L. 119-37) authorizes set-aside funding to projects and intermediaries serving Federally recognized Indian Tribes, and for Mississippi Delta Region Counties. Eligible applicants for the set-aside funds must demonstrate that at least 75 percent of the benefits of an approved loan in this program will assist ultimate recipients in the designated areas. Applications for any set-aside funds must be submitted to the RD State Office where the project is located by 4:30 p.m. (local time) on the following deadline dates. The deadline to submit completed applications for Federally recognized Indian Tribes and Mississippi Delta Region Counties' projects is May 31, 2026. It is possible that funds may also be appropriated by Congress for projects located in Rural Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Communities/Rural Economic Area Partnership areas. Completed applications for these projects, subject to available funding, must be submitted by July 15, 2026.

1.4 Definitions

The definitions applicable to this notice are published at 7 CFR 4274.302.

1.5 Application of Awards

The Agency will review, evaluate and score applications received in response to this Notice based on the provisions found in 7 CFR 4274.340 and as indicated in this Notice. Awards under the IRP will be made on a competitive basis using specific selection criteria contained in 7 CFR 4274.341(b). The Agency advises all interested parties that the applicant bears the full burden of preparing and submitting an application in response to this notice.

2.0 FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Type of Awards: Loan

Fiscal Year Funds: FY 2026

Available Funds: Funding for FY 2026 is $9,000,000

Award Amounts: The Agency anticipates a maximum award of $1 million for eligible Intermediaries submitting a loan request.

Anticipated Award Date:

Regular Funding: First Quarter- December 1, 2025, Second Quarter- March 1, 2025, Third Quarter- June 1, 2026, Fourth Quarter- September 1, 2026.

Federally recognized Indian Tribes and Mississippi Delta Region Counties Funding: June 15, 2026.

Empowerment Zones/Enterprise Communities/Rural Economic Area: July 15, 2026

Performance Period: None

Renewal or Supplemental Awards: None

Type of Assistance Instrument: Direct Loan

3.0 ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

3.1 Eligible Applicants

IRP loans may be made to a private non-profit corporation, a public agency, a Federally recognized Indian Tribe or one of its wholly owned arms and instrumentalities, or a cooperative entity, identified as an eligible intermediary in accordance with 7 CFR 4274.310.

The applicant and its principals must not be debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from participation in USDA programs, in accordance with 2 CFR parts 180 and 417. The applicant must not be delinquent on any federal debt, nor have any outstanding judgment obtained by the U.S. in a Federal court. Upon receipt of application, prior to award, and prior to disbursement of federal funds, the agency will screen the applicant and its principals through the Do Not Pay System, as required by 31 U.S.C. § 3354, to verify eligibility with respect to debarment, suspension, and any unresolved federal debts. Applicants are responsible for resolving any issues identified in the Do Not Pay System; if such issues are not resolved by the deadlines specified in this notice, the agency may proceed to award funds to other eligible applicants. Applicants are responsible for compliance with all applicable regulations, including 2 CFR parts 180 and 417.

3.2 Cost Sharing or Matching

The IRP revolving fund share of the eligible project cost of an ultimate recipient's project funded under this Notice, including the unpaid balance of any existing IRP loans, shall not exceed the lesser of (a) $400,000; and (b) Fifty percent of the originally-approved Agency IRP loan amount to an

intermediary. No more than 75 percent of the total cost of an ultimate recipient's project can be funded from Agency IRP loan funds. Points awarded for leveraging will be considered in accordance with the requirements specified in 7 CFR 4274.341(b)(4).

3.3 Other

Applications will only be accepted from eligible intermediaries that will establish, or have established, revolving loan programs for the purpose of providing loans to ultimate recipients for business purposes and community development in a rural area.

There are no responsiveness or threshold eligibility criteria for these loans. However, not more than one loan will be approved by the Agency for an intermediary in any single fiscal year unless the additional request is from this program's set-aside funding.

Applications will not be considered for funding if they do not provide enough information to determine eligibility, are not suitable for evaluation, or are missing required elements as stated in 7 CFR 4274.340.

4.0 APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

4.1 Address to Request Application Package

For further information, entities wishing to apply for assistance should contact the USDA RD State Office where they are located, to obtain copies of the application package. Applicants are also encouraged to contact their respective RD State Office for an email contact to submit an electronic application prior to the submission deadline date(s). Please note that applicants may locate the downloadable application package for this program by the Assistance Listing Number provided above.

4.2 Content and Form of Application Submission

An application must contain all the required elements described in 7 CFR 4274.340, and each selection priority criterion outlined in 7 CFR 4274.341(b) must be addressed in the application. An original copy of the application must be filed with an RD State Office for the state where the Intermediary is located.

The applicant documentation and forms needed for a complete application are in 7 CFR 4274.340. There are no specific formats or limitations on the number of pages required for an application narrative, and applicants may request any Agency forms and addresses from the USDA State Office https://www.rd.usda.gov/about-rd/offices/state-offices.

Any form that requires an original signature, but is signed electronically in the application submission, must be signed in ink by the authorized person prior to the disbursement of funds.

4.3 System for Award Management and Unique Entity Identifier

(a) At the time of application, each applicant must have an active registration in the System for Award Management (SAM) before submitting its application in accordance with 2 CFR part 25. In order to register in SAM, entities will be required to obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). Instructions for obtaining the UEI are available at https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration.

(b) Each applicant must maintain an active SAM registration, with current, accurate and complete information, at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application under consideration by a Federal awarding agency.

(c) Each applicant must ensure they complete the Financial Assistance General Certifications and Representations in SAM.

(d) Each applicant must provide a valid UEI in its application, unless determined exempt under 2 CFR 25.110.

(e) The Agency will not make an award until the applicant has complied with all SAM requirements including providing the UEI. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Agency is ready to make an award, the Agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

4.4 Submission Dates and Times

Applications, including applications for set-aside funding, must be received by the specified USDA RD State Office by the dates and times as indicated in the Federal Award Information section of this notice to compete for available funds. If the due date falls on a Saturday, Sunday or federal holiday, the application is due the next business day. The Agency will determine the application receipt date based on the actual date an application is received electronically, in person, or when a paper application is postmarked. The Agency will not solicit or consider new scoring or eligibility information that is submitted after the application deadline. RBCS also reserves the right to ask applicants for clarifying information and additional verification of assertions in the application.

4.5 Intergovernmental Review

Executive Order (EO) 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs, applies to this program. This EO requires that Federal agencies provide opportunities for consultation on proposed assistance with State and local governments. Many states have established a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to facilitate this consultation. For a list of States that maintain a SPOC, please see the USDA website: usda.gov/about-usda/general-information/staff-offices/office-chief-financial-officer/federal-financial-assistance-policy/intergovernmental-review. If your State has a SPOC, you may submit a copy of the application directly for review. Any comments obtained through the SPOC must be provided to your State Office for consideration as part of your application. If your state has not established a SPOC, you may submit your application directly to the Agency. Indian Tribes are exempt from this requirement.

4.6 Funding Restrictions

The intent of the IRP is identified above in section 1.1 of this notice. There are no funding restrictions beyond that the loan proceeds be used for eligible purposes stated in 7 CFR 4274.320. Building construction is an eligible use of funds under the program and all projects must be located in a rural area of a State. Any administrative costs must be approved annually by the Agency.

4.7 Other Submission Requirements

Please note that applicants may locate the downloadable application package for this program by the Assistance Listing Number provided in this notice.

5.0 APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

5.1 Criteria

All eligible and complete applications will be evaluated and scored based on the selection criteria and weights contained in 7 CFR 4274.341(b) and in this section of the notice. Failure to address any of the application criteria by the application deadline will result in the application being determined ineligible, and the application will not be considered for funding.

5.2 Review Selection Processes

The RD State Office will review applications to determine if they are eligible for assistance based on the requirements contained in 7 CFR part 4274, subpart D. If determined eligible, the application will be submitted to the National Office for funding competition with all eligible applications received by the quarterly application deadline or the deadline indicated for set-aside funding.

To distribute funds among the greatest number of projects possible during the respective funding periods, applications will be reviewed, organized and ranked in order from highest to lowest and funded up to the maximum funding available during each quarterly funding cycle in FY 2026. In accordance with 7 CFR 4274.341(b)(10)(i)7 the RBCS Administrator may award priority points for projects (maximum 10) that demonstrate program integrity by documenting in the application the following as applicable:

1. Domestic manufacturing and industrial capacity;
2. Domestic energy production and energy security;
3. New and expanded markets for American farmers and rural producers; and
4. Program integrity, including the prevention and reduction of fraud, waste, and abuse.

6.0 FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

6.1 Federal Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive notification for funding from the USDA RD State Office. Applicants must comply with all applicable statutes and regulations before the loan award will be obligated. An eligible application competing for regular IRP funds, but not selected, will be reconsidered in the three subsequent quarterly funding competitions, for a total of four competitions (and may be considered in a following fiscal year), provided the application and eligibility requirements have not changed. After competing in four consecutive quarterly competitions, any unsuccessful application for regular funds will receive written notification indicating that its application will no longer be considered for funding. Applicants competing for set-aside funding have only one application period per fiscal year to apply for set-aside funding. Unsuccessful applications for set-aside funding will receive written notification

indicating that their applications were not successful. An applicant with an unsuccessful application for set-aside funding may elect, in writing, to submit its project for IRP regular fund competitions commencing with the next quarterly application period.

6.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements

(a) Civil Rights. All awards of Federal financial assistance made under this NOFO are subject to applicable civil rights laws, which may include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1973, and the Equal Credit Opportunity Act of 1974.

(b) Build America, Buy America (BABAA). Awardees that are Non-Federal Entities, defined pursuant to 2 CFR 200.1 as any State, local government, Indian Tribe, Institution of Higher Education, or nonprofit organization, shall be governed by the requirements of Section 70914 of the Build America, Buy America Act (BABAA) within the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Public Law 117-58), and its implementing regulations at 2 CFR part 184. Any requests for waiver of these requirements must be submitted pursuant to USDA's guidance available online at usda.gov/ocfo/federal-financial-assistance-policy/USDABuyAmericaWaiver.

(c) Geospatial Data. Awardee, and any and all contracts entered into by the awardee with respect to the award, shall ensure that geospatial data required to be collected and provided to the Agency, conforms with the requirements of USDA Department Regulation DR-3465-001 and the Geospatial Metadata Standards set forth in DM 3465-001, which can be obtained online at usda.gov/directives/dr-3465-001 and usda.gov/directives/dm-3465-001.

(d) Additional requirements that apply to intermediaries selected for this program can be found in 7 CFR part 4274, subpart D.

(e) All successful applicants will be notified by letter which will include a Letter of Conditions and a Letter of Intent to Meet Conditions, which are not approval determinations. The loan will be considered approved when all conditions in the Letter of Conditions have been met and the Agency obligates the funding for the project.

6.3 Reporting

In addition, all recipients of Federal financial assistance are required to report information about first-tier sub-awards and executive compensation (see 2 CFR part 170, Appendix A). Applicants will be required to have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (Pub. L. 109-282) reporting requirements (see 2 CFR part 170, unless applicants are exempt under 2 CFR part 170).

Intermediaries must collect and maintain data provided by Ultimate Recipients on race, sex, and national origin and ensure that Ultimate Recipients collect and maintain this data. Race and ethnicity data will be collected in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Federal Register notice, Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity (62 FR 58782), October 30, 1997. Sex data will be collected in accordance with Title IX of the Education

Amendments of 1972. These items should not be submitted with the application but should be made available upon request by the Agency.

6.4 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The Agency has established annual performance measures to evaluate the IRP program. Estimates on the following performance measures, as part of your application, must be provided:

(1) Number of businesses assisted;

(2) Anticipated Number of jobs created; and

(3) Anticipated Number of jobs saved;.

These numbers are confirmed at annual site visits/field reviews after loan closing. At this time anticipated jobs are then verified and updated in reporting system.

When calculating jobs created, estimates should be based upon actual applications in the pipeline that will produce job hires. These jobs must be in direct relation to the IRP proceeds received. This could include jobs to be created by businesses as a result of assistance from an organization.

When calculating jobs saved, estimates should be based only on actual jobs that would have been lost if an organization did not receive IRP funding or actual jobs that would have been lost without assistance from an organization.

7.0 FEDERAL AWARD AGENCY CONTACTS

Lori Pittman, Program Management Division, Business Programs, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, MS 3226, Room 5160-S, Washington, D.C. 20250-3226, lori.pittman1@usda.gov, or call (202) 720-9815. For further information on this Notice, please contact the USDA RD State Office in the State in which the applicant's headquarters is located. A list of RD State Office contacts is provided at the following link: rd.usda.gov/about-rd/state-offices.

8.0 OTHER INFORMATION

8.1 Paperwork Reduction Act

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), the information collection requirements associated with the programs, as covered in this notice, have been approved by Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under OMB Control Number 0570-0021.

8.2 National Environmental Policy Act

All recipients under this notice are subject to the requirements of 7 CFR part 1b and must comply in accordance with 7 CFR 4274.305(b)

8.3 Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act

All applicants, in accordance with 2 CFR part 25, must be registered in SAM and have a UEI number as stated in Section 4.3 of this Notice. All recipients of Federal financial assistance are required to report

information about first-tier sub-awards and executive total compensation in accordance with 2 CFR part 170.

8.4 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

(a) Faith-based organizations may apply for this award on the same basis as any other organization, as set forth at, and subject to the protections and requirements of, this part and any applicable constitutional and statutory requirements, including 42 U.S.C. 2000bb *et seq.* USDA will not, in the selection of recipients, discriminate for or against an organization on the basis of the organization's religious character, motives, or affiliation, or lack thereof, or on the basis of conduct that would not be considered grounds to favor or disfavor a similarly situated secular organization.

(b) A faith-based organization that participates in this program will retain its independence from the Government and may continue to carry out its mission consistent with religious freedom and conscience protections in Federal law. Religious accommodations may also be sought under many of these religious freedom and conscience protection laws.

(c) A faith-based organization may not use direct Federal financial assistance from USDA to support or engage in any explicitly religious activities except when consistent with the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and any other applicable requirements. An organization receiving Federal financial assistance also may not, in providing services funded by USDA, or in their outreach activities related to such services, discriminate against a program beneficiary or prospective program beneficiary on the basis of religion, a religious belief, a refusal to hold a religious belief, or a refusal to attend or participate in a religious practice.

8.5 Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights laws and USDA civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Mission Areas, agencies, staff offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the State or local Agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, which can be obtained online at *https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/general-information/staff-offices/office-assistant-secretary-civil-rights/how-file-usda-discrimination-complaint/how-file-program-discrimination-complaint* and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To

request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410

Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

(2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov

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