

STAKEHOLDER ANNOUNCEMENT

USDA Seeks Applications to Advance Economic Development and Create Jobs for People in Rural America

WASHINGTON, Dec. 5, 2023 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development announced today that it is accepting applications to advance economic development and create jobs for people in rural America.

USDA is making this funding available under the [Rural Business Development Grant](#) program to support business opportunities or business enterprise projects in rural communities. Organizations eligible to receive funding include rural towns, communities, state agencies, authorities, nonprofits, federally recognized Tribes, public colleges and non-profit cooperatives.

Projects must be consistent with local community and economic development strategic plans. They must also support other economic development activities in the surrounding community.

Funds may be used to establish business support centers or to finance job training and leadership development in rural areas. They may also be used to repair or modernize buildings; finance feasibility studies or business plans; or purchase equipment to lease to small or emerging businesses.

In fiscal year 2024, USDA anticipates that part of the funding may be set aside for:

- Federally recognized Tribes.
- Rural Empowerment Zones/Enterprise Communities/Rural Economic Area Partnerships.
- Projects located in persistent poverty areas.
- [Strategic Economic and Community Development](#) (SECD) projects.

Eligible applicants for the persistent poverty and SECD set-aside funds must demonstrate that 100% of the benefits of an approved grant will assist beneficiaries in the designated areas.

The Department expects to invite applications in winter 2024 for set-aside funding to enhance the operation of rural transportation systems.

USDA is particularly interested in applications that will advance Biden-Harris Administration priorities to:

- Reduce climate pollution and increase resilience to the impacts of climate change through economic support to rural communities.
- Ensure all rural residents have equitable access to Rural Development (RD) programs and benefits from RD-funded projects; and
- Help rural communities recover economically through more and better market opportunities and through improved infrastructure.

Applications must be submitted to the nearest USDA Rural Development state office where the project is located by 4:30 p.m. ET on Feb. 28, 2024. For more information, visit [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) or see page 84123 of the Dec. 4, 2023, [Federal Register](#).

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