



# News Release

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## USDA Funds More than \$950K in Technical Assistance Grants to Support Rural Energy for America Program Applicants

*Expertise Available to Help VT/NH Farmers, Producers, Small Businesses Benefit from \$1.05 Billion in '23-'24 Inflation Reduction Act REAP Funding*

MONTPELIER, Vt., Jan. 25, 2024 – U.S. Department of Agriculture ([USDA](https://www.usda.gov)) Rural Development State Director for Vermont and New Hampshire, Sarah Waring, today announced \$951,197 in [Technical Assistance Grants \(TAGs\)](#) to help rural small businesses and agricultural producers apply for funding through the [Rural Energy for America Program \(REAP\)](#). As directed by the Biden-Harris Administration, REAP, which increases energy efficiency and decreases costs for thousands of rural U.S. businesses each year, received \$1.05 billion through the end of fiscal year 2024 under the bipartisan Inflation Reduction Act, and doubled its maximum project funding levels. On Monday, the Agency announced more than [\\$5.1 million in REAP grant funding](#) throughout the Twin States.

“Farmers, producers and small business owners don’t have the luxury of a ‘work/life balance’ because their work *is* their lives,” said Waring. “The time it takes to fully understand and navigate a REAP application is significant—it can involve feasibility studies, environmental reviews, and other technical reports—not to mention the grant-writing itself. With REAP TAG funding now available, technical assistance providers throughout Vermont and New Hampshire can help these forward-thinking businesses grow, save money and hire more people while doing their part to fight climate change.”

REAP TAGs can be used to help small businesses conduct audits and assessments, prepare reports, plan construction, and file and register for applications, among other uses. Eligible REAP TAG applicants include for-profit and non-profit entities, public utilities, investor-owned utilities, colleges and universities, local governments, electric cooperatives and councils.

In Vermont, three technical assistance (TA) providers will support different applicant groups:

- **Farm Credit East – \$200,000** REAP TAG. Works with agricultural producers to prepare financials, file reports and write grant applications.
- **Pecos Wind Energy – \$152,050**. Identifies small businesses and farmers situated in ideal locations for wind power generation.
- **Ecology Action – \$100,027**. Supports small and independent grocers to upgrade heating, cooling and refrigeration systems.

In New Hampshire, two TA providers will form a multi-service partnership:

- **Clean Energy New Hampshire – \$499,120**. Works with **Plymouth Area Energy Initiative** to help eligible small business and agricultural producers create comprehensive REAP applications.

“Partnering with Vermont agribusinesses to provide grant writing support will reduce the cost and how-to barriers that many busy farmers face,” said **Heather LaPierre**, Grant Coordinator for Farm Credit East. “Our goal is to make the process simple and help farmers prioritize the energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy projects that are right for their business.” [Heather.LaPierre@farmcrediteast.com](mailto:Heather.LaPierre@farmcrediteast.com) / (607) 645-2042.

**Josh Groleau**, CEO of Pecos Wind Power, agrees. “REAP grants are going to save farmers and rural small businesses a lot of money. We can help farmers offset their electricity bills with on-site wind power.” [Josh@PecosWindPower.com](mailto:Josh@PecosWindPower.com) / (207) 745-2231.

**Sam Evans-Brown**, Executive Director of Clean Energy New Hampshire, was pleased to announce the REAP TAG opportunity for New Hampshire farmers and producers. “REAP is such a powerful program, and so often the barriers that stand in the way of local entrepreneurs, farmers and small businesses taking advantage of the program are surmountable if folks get some help. We’re happy to get the chance to work with businesses in the Granite State to overcome those barriers and get to the business of growing the economy and reducing emissions.” [Sam@CleanEnergyNH.org](mailto:Sam@CleanEnergyNH.org) / (603) 573-9926 x 700.

“The USDA REAP grant is the best opportunity for rural Vermont food retailers to upgrade their stores, become more energy efficient, and improve profitability,” added **Peter Cooke**, Co-Founder of Ratio Institute, an initiative of Ecology Action. [Peter.Cooke@RatioInstitute.org](mailto:Peter.Cooke@RatioInstitute.org) / (207) 409-6732.

Under the leadership of the Biden-Harris Administration, Rural Development helps expand economic opportunities, create jobs and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in high-poverty areas. For more information, visit [www.rd.usda.gov](http://www.rd.usda.gov).

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