



News Release

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Biden-Harris Administration Announces Hands-On Support to Help Ag Producers Applying for Renewable Energy Funding

Grants Made Possible by President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act

ALEXANDRIA, LA., Feb. 20, 2024 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development is inviting grant applications from organizations to provide hands-on assistance to agricultural producers applying for [Rural Energy for America Program \(REAP\)](#) funding, which will lower energy costs and make energy efficiency improvements in rural areas.

This assistance is made possible by President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act, the nation's largest-ever investment in combatting the climate crisis. It also advances the President's *Investing in America* agenda to grow the nation's economy from the middle out and bottom up.

“President Biden and USDA are ensuring farmers, ranchers and small businesses get a fair chance at grants that make energy more affordable,” Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development Farah Ahmad said. “We are giving them the know-how and support they need to be a vital part of the clean energy economy. Through these efforts, people in rural areas will be able to lower their energy costs, increase American energy independence and strengthen the resilience of their business operations.”

Since December 2022, USDA has made up to \$1.3 billion available in REAP funding through the Inflation Reduction Act. To support the staff on the ground making this historic effort a success, the Biden-Harris Administration worked with USDA Rural Development State Offices to provide them with more flexibility to award new technical assistance grants through the [REAP Technical Assistance Grants Program \(REAP TAG\)](#), [hire additional staff support](#), and bolster their outreach and customer service efforts.

“The hands-on support provided by the Biden-Harris Administration through the Inflation Reduction Act is empowering agricultural producers to lower energy costs, increase independence, and strengthen business operations in rural areas,” Louisiana Rural Development State Director, Deidre Deculus Robert states. “This historic effort is not only combatting the climate crisis but also advancing economic growth and resilience from the bottom up, highlighting the importance of having strategic, skilled partners who can assist with guiding agriculture producers and rural businesses through the application process.”

Today, USDA is making \$16 million available through the REAP TAG Program to provide additional support to farmers, ranchers and rural small business owners seeking REAP funds.

Eligible recipients for these grants include state, Tribal or local governments; colleges and universities; electric cooperatives and utility companies; and for-profit and nonprofit organizations. Recipients may use the funds to:

- Help rural agricultural producers and small business owners apply for REAP funding.
- Provide information on how business owners and agricultural producers can improve the energy efficiency of their operations and use renewable energy technologies and resources.
- Conduct required energy assessments and audits.
- Help agricultural producers and small business owners with planning construction and development of renewable energy or energy efficiency projects.
- Assist with the completion of environmental reports and/or documentation required for submittal of applications.

Applications must be submitted by March 15, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. ET. For additional information and submission details, see page 12815 of the Feb. 20 [Federal Register](#).

Background

The Biden-Harris Administration championed the Inflation Reduction Act to help provide new funding and unprecedented incentives to expand clean energy, transform rural power production, create jobs and spur economic growth. It is the largest single investment in rural electrification since the Rural Electrification Act of 1936.

Through the Inflation Reduction Act, the Administration is delivering on its promise to fight climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions across America.

It provides funding to USDA Rural Development to help eligible organizations invest in renewable energy infrastructure and zero-emission systems and make energy-efficiency improvements that will significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

For instance, the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) provides grants and loans to help farmers and small business owners expand their use of wind, solar and other forms of clean energy and make energy efficiency improvements. These innovations help them increase their income, grow their businesses, address climate change and lower energy costs for American families.

REAP is part of the Justice40 Initiative, which is working to ensure that 40% of the benefits of certain federal investments reach communities that are marginalized, underserved and overburdened by pollution and underinvestment.

The [REAP Technical Assistance Grants Program](#) provides funding to organizations that support farmers and small businesses owners applying for federal funds for wind, solar and other renewable energy systems. This program works alongside REAP to create new economic opportunities, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and make energy more affordable for American families.

Together, these programs will boost the long-term resiliency, reliability and affordability of renewable energy systems.

For more information on the Inflation Reduction Act, visit: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/inflation-reduction-act>.

To learn more about investment resources for Louisiana rural areas, visit www.rd.usda.gov/la.

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to help 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 rural, tribal and high-poverty areas. For more information, visit www.rd.usda.gov.

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