



News Release

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USDA Invests \$266 Million To Improve Rural Community Facilities and Essential Services in 16 States and Puerto Rico

Funding Includes \$3.2 Million for Southern Vermont Community Institutions

WASHINGTON, March 23, 2021 – United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development Justin Maxson today announced that USDA is investing \$266 million to build and improve critical community facilities to benefit nearly 3 million rural residents in 16 states and Puerto Rico. Included in the national initiative is \$3.2 million in funding to support the [Parent Child Center of Rutland County](#) and Retreat Farm in Brattleboro.

“The Biden-Harris administration has made beating the COVID-19 pandemic and restoring the economy a top-priority, and USDA is playing a critical role,” Maxson said. “USDA Rural Development programs and services are in a unique position to help rural communities facing challenges caused by the pandemic. The investments announced today will spur community development and build sound infrastructure like hospitals and medical facilities to help rural America build back better and stronger.”

Background:

USDA is investing in 41 projects across the country through the [Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program](#). The assistance will improve essential community services for two local projects:

- The Parent & Child Center of Rutland County received a \$367,600 disaster grant and \$833,900 direct loan to renovate and modernize its Chaplin Campus into a community facility that includes a food pantry, affordable daycare programs and services for families disrupted by economic stress and substance abuse.
- In Brattleboro, the historic Retreat Farm received a \$2 million loan to develop workforce training and community educational outreach, and create an 11,000 square-foot indoor event space. Established in 1837, the Farm originally provided food, fuel and restorative services to patients and staff at the Brattleboro Retreat Psychiatric Hospital. It was transitioned to a community nonprofit in 2015, and after expanding its partnerships with local organizations, it is now a hub of the local food movement that helps families in need.

Outside of Vermont, these investments are going to Alabama, California, Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, North Carolina, New York, Ohio, South Dakota, Virginia, Washington and Puerto Rico.

More than 100 types of projects are eligible for Community Facilities funding. Eligible applicants include municipalities, public bodies, nonprofit organizations and federally recognized Native American tribes. Projects must be in rural areas with a population of 20,000 or less.

Interested parties should contact their [USDA Rural Development state office](#) for information about additional funding, application procedures and eligibility details. Also see the [Community Facilities Direct Loan Program Guidance Book for Applicants](#) (PDF, 669 KB) for a detailed overview of the application process.

Under the Biden-Harris Administration, 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 housing, infrastructure improvements, business development, high-speed internet access, and community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care. For more information, visit www.rd.usda.gov. If you'd like to subscribe to USDA Rural Development updates, visit our [GovDelivery subscriber page](#).

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, ensuring access to healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate, smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.

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