

STAKEHOLDER ANNOUNCEMENT

USDA Invites Applications for Funding to Help Rural Families and Small Businesses Reduce Energy Costs and Make Energy Efficiency Improvements

Agency Also Seeks Comments on a Final Rule

WASHINGTON, April 2, 2020 – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development Bette Brand today announced that USDA is seeking applications from utilities and energy efficiency entities to help rural families and small businesses reduce energy costs through energy efficiency improvements.

USDA is making funding available under the [Rural Energy Savings Program](#) (RESP). Through this program, qualified utilities and similar intermediaries can provide loans to rural families and small businesses to help them reduce energy costs and make energy efficiency improvements. The funds also may be used to replace manufactured housing units with more energy-efficient ones.

To apply, applicants must submit a letter of intent to RESP@usda.gov. Paper submissions will not be accepted. USDA will notify selected applicants in writing to submit a loan application. For application deadlines and other details, please see page 18549 of the April 2, 2020, [Federal Register](#).

USDA also invites comments on a final rule that seeks to make changes to RESP eligibility requirements, the application process, criteria to evaluate creditworthiness, and how to obtain application materials. Electronic and written comments must be received on or before May 18, 2020. Additional information about the final rule is available on page 18413 of the April 2, 2020, [Federal Register](#).

Interested parties can learn more about RESP funding and the final rule during a webinar on Wednesday, April 29 at 2 p.m. Eastern Time. Register for the webinar at https://globalmeet.webcasts.com/starthere.jsp?ei=1309046&tp_key=9f917c0c7a.

USDA encourages applications that will support recommendations made in the [Report to the President of the United States from the Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity](#) (PDF, 5.4 MB) to help improve the quality of life in rural America. Applicants are encouraged to consider projects that provide measurable results in helping rural communities build robust and sustainable economies through strategic investments in infrastructure, partnerships and innovation. Key strategies include:

- Achieving e-Connectivity for Rural America
- Developing the Rural Economy
- Harnessing Technological Innovation
- Supporting a Rural Workforce
- Improving Quality of Life

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