



# News Release

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## **Biden-Harris Administration Invests \$110 Million to Improve Health Care for Rural People in 43 States and Guam**

*Under Secretary for Rural Development Xochitl Torres Small Visits Families Flourish in Lebanon, NH, to Announce National Funding; Includes \$2.31 Million to Granite State Healthcare Institutions*

**LEBANON, NH, October 12, 2022** – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Under Secretary Xochitl Torres Small today announced that USDA is awarding \$110 million in grants to improve health care facilities in rural towns across the Nation. These grants will help 208 rural health care organizations expand critical services in 43 states and Guam. The investments include \$2.31 million for four rural health care organizations in New Hampshire: HealthFirst Family Care Center (\$1 million), West Central Behavioral Health (\$142,000), Mid-State Health Center (\$176,000) and Families Flourish Northeast (\$1 million). Also among award recipients is Upper Valley Haven in White River Junction, Vermont (\$88,000). In total, USDA has provided \$5.83 million in emergency healthcare funding for New Hampshire and Vermont institutions in 2022.

“Access to modern and sustainable health care infrastructure is critical to the health, well-being and prosperity for the millions of people who live in rural and Tribal communities,” Torres Small said. “That’s why the Biden-Harris Administration remains committed to making sure that people who need it most, no matter where they live, have access to high-quality and reliable health care services like urgent care, primary care and dental care. Through the Emergency Rural Health Care Grants I am announcing today, USDA is being a strong partner to people in 43 states and Guam.”

The investments USDA is announcing will help build, renovate and equip health care facilities like hospitals and clinics in rural areas. They also include more than \$9 million for 12 rural health care organizations to help 187,000 people living in [energy communities](#), which are areas with high concentrations of coal-dependent jobs. This funding will help communities that are vital to our country’s energy production as the nation transitions to a clean-energy economy.

Sarah Waring, State Director of Rural Development in New Hampshire and Vermont, was pleased to join Under Secretary Torres Small in making the announcement. “We are so proud to grant this Emergency Rural Healthcare funding to such deserving institutions, she said. “We are especially thankful to the doctors, nurses and staff who, during a devastating pandemic, provided high-quality care, compassion and comfort to their patients despite great personal and professional sacrifice. These grants embody the Biden-Harris Administration’s mission to improve quality of life in rural America.”

The Biden-Harris Administration is making this [Emergency Rural Health Care Grants Program](#) funding available through its historic legislative package, the American Rescue

Plan Act. The Act and this program are examples of the government's ability to respond quickly to ensure every person and family has access to high-quality health care no matter their zip code.

The investments will be used for projects such as those to help rural hospitals and health care providers implement telehealth and nutrition assistance programs, increase staffing to administer COVID-19 vaccines and testing, build or renovate facilities, and purchase medical supplies. They will also help regional partnerships, public bodies, nonprofits and Tribes solve regional rural health care problems, which will help build a stronger, more sustainable rural health care system in response to the pandemic. For example:

- In Lebanon, NH, Families Flourish Northeast will use a \$1 million grant to renovate a residential treatment center to help address substance-use disorders among mothers. Rates of substance-exposed pregnancies and the severity of maternal substance use have risen in Grafton, Carroll and Coos counties throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The facility will provide patients with easier access to public transportation, educational and employment opportunities, public school for their children, outpatient treatment and social activities.
- At Health First Family Care Center (HFFCC) in Franklin, NH, a \$750,000 grant will fund modern improvements for safer, more efficient patient intake and treatment. Updates also include new lighting, security cameras and wheelchair access. At HFFCC's Laconia location, a \$250,000 ERHC grant will fund a project to reconfigure the entryway, check-in area, and waiting room, and expand corridors for easier, safer patient movement.
- In White River Junction, Vermont, Upper Valley Haven will upgrade its kitchen from residential-grade to commercial-grade, with increased food preparation and storage capacity. Funding will also help purchase a van with a reefer unit to pick up and deliver food, and service the Children's program.

The investments USDA is announcing today will expand health care services in Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wyoming and Guam.

### **Background: Emergency Rural Health Care Grants**

Congress passed the American Rescue Plan Act in March 2021 to deliver immediate economic relief to people impacted by the pandemic. In August 2021, USDA made the [Emergency Rural Health Care Grants](#) available through the American Rescue Plan to help rural health care facilities, tribes and communities expand access to health care services and nutrition assistance. The assistance is helping provide immediate relief to support rural hospitals, health care clinics and local communities. USDA is administering the funds through Rural Development's Community Facilities Program.

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