

STAKEHOLDER ANNOUNCEMENT

USDA Announces Rural Cooperative Development Grant Awards

WASHINGTON, Nov. 7, 2019 – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development Donald “DJ” LaVoy today announced funding to provide technical assistance and training to rural cooperatives. Through the Rural Cooperative Development Grants program, [USDA is awarding a total of \\$5.8 million to 30 organizations in 21 states and the District of Columbia to help small businesses retain and create jobs in rural areas.](#)

The awards announced today include the following:

- In Hawaii, the Kohala Center, Inc. will use a \$200,000 grant to provide cooperative and business education and technical assistance in Hawaii's rural areas. Center staff will assist six groups, 75 businesses and 12 cooperatives in rural Hawaii, in forming new entities, strengthening ag-related coops in the state, helping with feasibility studies, financial planning, and application assistance.
- The University of Wisconsin Board of Regents will receive a \$199,799 grant to provide technical assistance to cooperatives in rural areas of Wisconsin and Minnesota. The primary objective is to improve economic conditions of rural areas through co-op development by: 1) providing training and resources to develop new co-ops; 2) fostering an environment to develop ventures in food systems, housing, childcare and health care; 3) increase the use of co-op development as a tool in succession planning and; 4) improve performance of established co-ops through training and education on co-op governance, finance and management. The project is expected to serve 170 groups, 202 businesses and 90 co-ops.

This program improves economic conditions in rural areas by helping individuals and businesses start, expand or improve rural cooperatives and other mutually-owned businesses. Under this program, nonprofit corporations and institutions of higher education are eligible to apply. Public bodies, for-profit business and individuals are not eligible. Grants may be used to develop and operate a rural cooperative development center that could provide the following technical assistance and other services to rural businesses:

- Conducting feasibility studies;
- Developing business plans; and
- Providing leadership and operational improvement training

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