

STAKEHOLDER ANNOUNCEMENT

USDA Partners to Provide Rural Placemaking Technical Assistance in Regions Across the United States

WASHINGTON, Oct. 19, 2020 – United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development Bette Brand today announced that USDA has signed cooperative agreements with five organizations to support placemaking technical assistance throughout the United States.

USDA is providing the assistance through the [Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge \(RPIC\)](#). The department and its partners will help rural communities develop actionable strategies to capitalize on local community assets and potential through the creation of quality public spaces that contribute to the community's social, physical and economic well-being. Through RPIC, USDA is empowering rural communities to improve their quality of life and prosperity through revitalization, workforce development, entrepreneurship, broadband, housing, and tourism efforts.

The department is partnering with organizations who will help develop placemaking plans with leaders in rural communities for two years. These organizations are listed below.

- In the Northeast, the Pennsylvania Downtown Center, in Harrisburg, will use a \$140,000 grant to provide technical assistance to help develop a plan to support downtown revitalization in the city of New Castle, the town of Shirley, and the boroughs of Clarion, Emlenton, Mapleton, Mt. Union and Reynoldsville in Pennsylvania. Funds will be used to develop community assessments, action strategies and annual work plans.
- In the South, Winrock International Institute for Agricultural Development will use a \$215,000 grant to help develop a plan to support rural tourism opportunities in the cities of Lonoke, England, Stuttgart and Helena-West Helena in Arkansas.
- In the Midwest, McClure Engineering Company will use a \$215,000 grant to develop a plan to support housing, workforce and broadband development in the city of Sheffield in Iowa and the cities of Atchison and Iola in Kansas. McClure will provide support through partnerships with capacity building organizations Sheffield Betterment Foundation and Thrive Allen County.
- Also, in the Midwest, Pierce County, Neb., will use a \$215,000 grant to develop a plan to support outreach to students and recent graduates for rural entrepreneurship opportunities in the agricultural sector in Pierce and Madison counties in Nebraska.
- In the West, Tolani Lake Enterprises in Winslow, Ariz., will use a \$215,000 grant to provide technical assistance to develop a plan to support Tribal lands and tourism for the Navajo Nation's Cameron Chapter in Coconino, County.

USDA encouraged 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 life in rural America. Applicants were encouraged to consider projects that provided measurable results in helping rural communities build robust and sustainable economies through strategic investment. 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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