



News Release

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USDA Invests \$1 Billion to Improve Community Infrastructure for People Living in Rural Towns Across the Country

\$4.2 Million in Funding Will Increase Access to Health Care, Education and Public Safety for Families and Rural Communities in Vermont & New Hampshire

BESSEMER, Ala., Jan. 26, 2022 – United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Deputy Secretary Dr. Jewel Bronaugh today announced that USDA is investing \$1 billion to build and improve critical community facilities in 48 states, Puerto Rico and Guam. This infrastructure funding will increase access to health care, education and public safety while spurring community development and building sound infrastructure for people living in rural communities. Included in the funding is \$1,575,270 for Vermont infrastructure projects and \$2,676,410 for those in New Hampshire.

“The Biden-Harris Administration has made investing in infrastructure improvements a top priority,” Bronaugh said. “These loans and grants will help rural communities invest in facilities and services that are vital to all communities, such as health care facilities, schools, libraries, and first responder vehicles and equipment. When we invest in essential services in rural America, we build opportunity and prosperity for the people who call rural communities home.”

“Our rural communities deserve better schools, easier access to healthcare and more effective public services,” said Sarah Waring, State Director of USDA Rural Development in Vermont and New Hampshire. “And today, because of the Biden-Harris Administration’s focus on funding public infrastructure, investments in Vermont and New Hampshire are improving the lives of families, children and communities. We are proud of the work our team has done to bring federal resources to the table.”

Bronaugh highlighted 737 projects that USDA is making in five programs that will fund essential community services to help rural America build back better, stronger and more equitably than ever before. These programs include [Community Facilities Direct Loans and Grants](#), [Community Facilities Loan Guarantees](#), [Community Facilities Technical Assistance Training Grants](#), [Community Facilities Disaster Grants](#), and [Economic Impact Initiative Grants](#). The projects will finance emergency response vehicles and equipment; build or improve hospitals and clinics and help fund other essential community facilities. Bronaugh underscored the critical role that Senator Richard Shelby of Alabama, Vice Chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations, had in fighting for additional funding for the Community Facilities Direct Loans, which made many of these investments in critical rural infrastructure possible.

For example:

- At White Mountains Regional School District in Whitefield, NH, a \$70,500 Economic Impact Initiative grant and \$36,900 Community Facilities grant will fund a ‘Student-LED Re-Volt,’ the result of climate-smart pupils pulling together to retrofit their school with energy-efficient LED lighting. The generated savings

can be redirected to student outcomes, such as integrating the project's engineering and electrical aspects into STEM programs.

- PB&J, Inc. will use a \$896,000 Community Facilities direct loan to purchase a building and land for the Children's Early Learning Space (CELS), a childcare center in Waterbury, Vt. CELS cares for 40 children from infants through age six, and will add an afterschool program that should double the number of infants and toddlers. Owning the property will also allow the non-profit to reimagine its outdoor spaces by improving the playgrounds and adding gardens to complement new, outdoor-based programs and curriculum.
- In Plymouth, NH, a \$1.99 million Community Facilities direct loan to the Mid-State Community Development Corporation will convert a retail building into a childcare center, allowing it to expand from 18 to 60 children. The project will improve access to childcare for area families, and allow the center to operate with a more sustainable business model. Renovations include energy-efficient features, such as solar panels and heat pumps.

Background:

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. For more information, visit <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program>.

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

The awards being announced today are being made in Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Washington D.C., Puerto Rico and Guam.

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

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