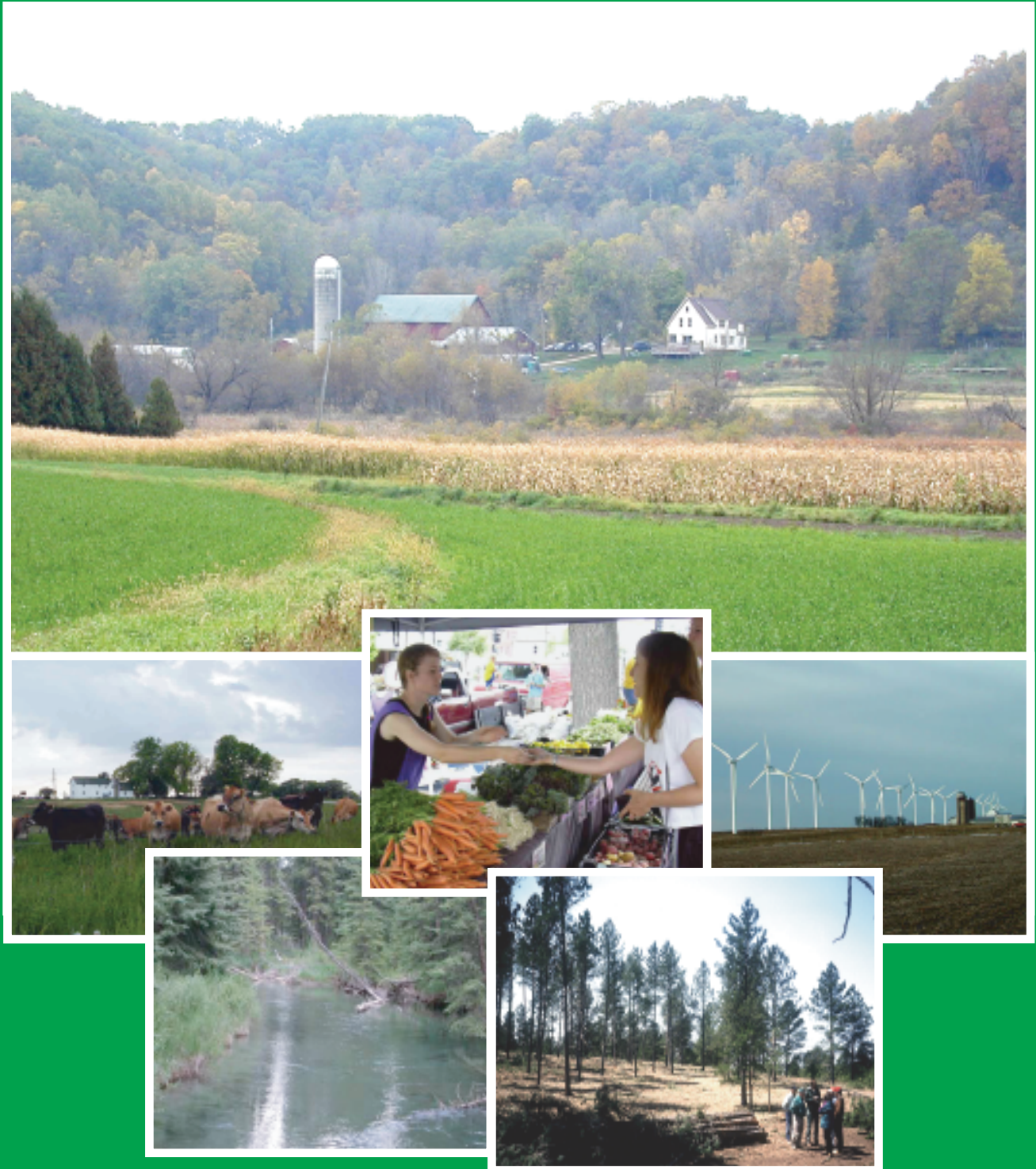




Building Better Rural Places

August
2004

Federal Programs for Sustainable Agriculture, Forestry,
Entrepreneurship, Conservation, and Community Development



Building Better Rural Places

*Federal Programs for Sustainable Agriculture, Forestry,
Entrepreneurship, Conservation, and Community Development*

A publication of U.S. Department of Agriculture agencies
working together for sustainable rural development

in collaboration with

The Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
and The National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT)

Authors

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Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SARE)

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Locating Programs in the Directory by Field of Interest and Type of Assistance

The page numbers listed below identify the locations in this guide for programs relevant to each highlighted topic.

Programs to help you build sustainable communities

Informational resources: 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 21, 23, 25, 30, 32, 36, 37, 39, 40, 43, 45, 47, 48, 50, 52, 55, 61, 63, 65, 70, 73, 75, 80, 82, 94, 98, 100, 102, 106, 108, 109, 110, 112, 113, 114, 116, 118, 119, 121, 122, 130, 132, 134, 136, 138, 141

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Funding – Loans, grants, and disbursements: 4, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 23, 25, 30, 32, 37, 40, 43, 45, 47, 48, 50, 52, 55, 61, 63, 65, 70, 75, 80, 82, 100, 102, 106, 108, 109, 110, 112, 113, 114, 116, 118, 119, 121, 122, 130, 132, 136, 141

Business and financial opportunities: 4, 8, 10, 14, 16, 23, 25, 40, 45, 47, 48, 50, 52, 55, 61, 63, 65, 70, 100, 102, 108, 109, 110, 112, 113, 114, 116, 118, 119, 121, 122, 130, 132, 141

Environment – Water, soil, air, energy, and pollution issues: 6, 8, 12, 21, 25, 30, 32, 36, 37, 43, 45, 47, 48, 50, 52, 55, 61, 73, 75, 82, 94, 100, 106, 134, 138

Programs to assist farmers, ranchers, and agricultural concerns

Informational resources: 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 14, 16, 18, 20, 21, 23, 26, 28, 29, 30, 34, 36, 37, 39, 40, 42, 45, 54, 55, 57, 59, 61, 63, 66, 68, 71, 73, 77, 79, 80, 82, 85, 86, 88, 92, 94, 96, 100, 104, 110, 114, 124, 126, 132, 134, 136, 138, 140

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Funding – Loans, grants, and disbursements: 1, 2, 7, 8, 14, 16, 18, 20, 23, 26, 28, 29, 30, 34, 37, 40, 42, 45, 54, 57, 59, 61, 63, 66, 68, 71, 77, 80, 82, 85, 86, 88, 92, 94, 96, 100, 104, 110, 114, 126, 132, 134, 136, 138

Business and financial opportunities: 1, 2, 7, 8, 16, 23, 26, 28, 29, 40, 45, 59, 61, 63, 66, 71, 77, 100, 104, 110, 114, 132, 134, 136

Environment – Water, soil, air, energy, and pollution issues: 1, 6, 8, 18, 20, 21, 29, 30, 34, 36, 37, 42, 45, 54, 57, 61, 73, 79, 82, 92, 94, 96, 100, 126, 134, 138

Programs that focus on food systems, nutrition, and health

Informational resources: 6, 14, 16, 21, 23, 39, 40, 55, 61, 73, 77, 79, 80, 82, 86, 92, 114, 126, 136

Technical assistance and advice: 6, 14, 16, 21, 23, 39, 40, 55, 61, 73, 77, 79, 80, 82, 86, 92, 114, 126, 136

Funding – Loans, grants, and disbursements: 14, 16, 23, 40, 55, 61, 73, 77, 80, 82, 86, 114, 126, 136

Business and financial opportunities: 14, 16, 23, 40, 55, 61, 77, 114, 136

Environment – Water, soil, air, energy, and pollution issues: 6, 21, 61, 73, 77, 79, 80, 82, 92

Programs related to forestry, fisheries, wildlife, and the environment

Informational resources: 1, 6, 12, 18, 20, 21, 29, 30, 32, 34, 36, 37, 42, 43, 45, 47, 48, 50, 52, 54, 61, 73, 75, 90, 94, 96, 106, 134, 138, 140, 141

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Funding – Loans, grants, and disbursements: 1, 12, 18, 20, 29, 30, 32, 34, 37, 42, 43, 45, 47, 48, 50, 52, 54, 61, 75, 90, 94, 96, 106, 134, 138, 141

Business and financial opportunities: 45, 47, 48, 50, 52, 54, 61, 90

Environment – Water, soil, air, energy, and pollution issues: 1, 6, 12, 18, 20, 21, 29, 30, 32, 36, 37, 42, 43, 45, 47, 48, 50, 52, 54, 61, 73, 94, 96, 106, 134, 138

Programs to help small businesses and entrepreneurs

Informational Resources: 4, 8, 10, 14, 16, 21, 23, 25, 36, 39, 40, 45, 47, 50, 61, 63, 65, 70, 73, 84, 98, 100, 102, 108, 109, 110, 113, 116, 118, 119, 121, 122, 130, 132

Technical assistance and advice: 8, 10, 14, 21, 23, 25, 36, 39, 40, 45, 47, 50, 61, 63, 65, 70, 73, 84, 98, 100, 102, 108, 109, 110, 113, 116, 118, 119, 121, 122, 130, 132

Funding – Loans, grants, and disbursements: 4, 8, 10, 14, 16, 23, 25, 40, 45, 47, 50, 61, 63, 65, 70, 100, 102, 108, 109, 110, 113, 116, 118, 119, 121, 122, 130, 132

Business and financial opportunities: 8, 10, 14, 16, 23, 25, 40, 45, 47, 50, 61, 63, 65, 70, 84, 100, 102, 108, 109, 110, 113, 116, 118, 119, 121, 122, 130, 132

Environment – Water, soil, air, energy, and pollution issues: 8, 10, 21, 25, 36, 45, 47, 50, 61, 73, 100

Introduction

This guide is written for anyone seeking help from federal programs to foster innovative enterprises in agriculture and forestry in the United States. Specifically, the guide addresses program resources in community development; sustainable land management; and value-added and diversified agriculture and forestry. Thus, it can help farmers, entrepreneurs, community developers, conservationists, and many other individuals, as well as private and public organizations, both for-profit and not-for-profit.

The guide can also help USDA and other agency employees become aware and take better advantage of the enormous array of federal programs and resources available to their clients in supporting agricultural and forestry innovations. This edition constitutes the guide's fourth printing and second complete update, incorporating programs from the 2002 Farm Bill.

How can the guide help you?

We hope to introduce you to programs that can be useful to your work, including some you might not otherwise have thought to pursue. We have included descriptions of federal programs or resources that may create opportunities or provide assistance in adding value, diversifying, or adopting more sustainable practices in agricultural and forest product enterprises.

Along with a general overview of each program, the guide explains the assistance the program offers and its purposes, as well as the restrictions on that assistance. When possible, we give specific examples of how the program has actually been used to support such work.

How is the guide organized?

There are three ways to identify programs that can help you:

- The table of contents lists federal programs as they appear alphabetically in the directory.
- The section on Locating Programs in the Directory by Field of Interest and Type of Assistance sorts the programs into five fields of interest, including those that:
 - Help build sustainable communities

- Assist farmers, ranchers and agricultural concerns
- Focus on food systems, nutrition, and health
- Are related to forestry, fisheries, wildlife, and the environment
- Help small businesses and entrepreneurs.

Under each field of interest is a list of the type of assistance available: informational resources; technical assistance and advice; funding – loans, grants and disbursements; business and financial opportunities; and environment – water, soil, air, energy, and pollution issues.

- The index identifies programs by key phrases appropriate to the resources they offer.

This guide includes programs that offer significant assistance to support agricultural and forestry innovations, particularly those related to value-added and diversified enterprises; sustainable land and resource management; and community development. Although we sought suggestions from many people, undoubtedly some relevant programs escaped our attention.

Further, although the program descriptions are accurate as of this printing, aspects of some programs will change. Please check Internet websites, when available, for updates and applications for programs.

What kinds of innovations do programs described in this guide support?

Increasing numbers of farmers, foresters, and other landowners seek to adopt resource production practices that are both environmentally and economically sound. For example, many farmers want to reduce their use of pesticides, protect their soil, or improve habitat for wildlife, while maintaining or increasing the profitability of their land. This guide offers landowners help in pursuing a wide variety of land management strategies that combine environmental and economic concerns.

These strategies include sustainable forestry practices; intensive rotational grazing of livestock; soil conservation structures; organic or bio-dynamic farming systems; Integrated Pest

Management (IPM); diversified crops and crop rotations; farmland protection, wetland and other habitat restoration; and many other practices. This guide includes numerous programs that help landowners get information, funding, technical assistance and other resources to support such land management changes.

Many entrepreneurs seek to add value to agricultural and forestry resources. Because earnings in extractive industries (for example, agricultural production and timber harvesting) are generally low and highly volatile, many communities seek to build economic and environmental sustainability by adding value to natural resources through processing, packaging, marketing, distributing the products themselves, or by producing their goods with methods that gain market premiums.

Creating value-added jobs can improve the diversity of the local economy, increase local incomes, capture higher profits locally, and use local natural resources more efficiently and sustainably. This guide describes many programs offering financial, technical, marketing, and other assistance for such enterprises.

Both rural and urban communities suffer from the drain of physical and economic resources. Many are concerned about job creation, increasing social stability and raising the standard of living of their citizens. For all communities, these needs translate into a broad array of initiatives, from incubators and others means of spawning new businesses, to training programs, job creation, market development, infrastructure improvements and improved access to nutritious foods in local communities. Localities can use this guide to identify forms of federal economic and technical assistance most appropriate to their needs.

What are successful strategies for obtaining resources to support forestry and agricultural innovations?

This guide lists numerous programs that can help advance innovations in sustainable agriculture, forestry, entrepreneurship, conservation, and community development. Following some sensible and logical steps will help increase your chances of targeting programs for your needs and writing successful proposals.

What are the hallmarks of a well-conceived project?

A successful federally funded project – whether a research proposal, conservation plan, marketing or other proposal – is no different from any other good project. It has tightly defined purposes; a clear strategy to accomplish them on a realistic timeline; the necessary people, money, and other resources; a basis for evaluating the process when done; and an effective means of communicating results.

Many projects are improved by a thoughtful effort to build supporting coalitions. A funder will look favorably on, and may require, local matches of funding. Remember that funding matches usually can also come in the form of existing staff salaries and other “in-kind” contributions, as well as actual dollars.

In designing a good project, be sure that you have included the right people in the planning process itself. Every participant should not only care about the idea, but also be prepared to contribute to its execution. Some questions to consider in developing your proposal include the following:

- What problem do you seek to address?
- What is your principal strategy to resolve that problem?
- Why is this strategy better than other approaches you might consider?
- Have other people, locally or otherwise, addressed this problem? If so, what have you learned from their work, and how does your effort relate to theirs?
- Who else might be concerned about your issues? Should they be involved in your project?
- What is a realistic timeline for action?
- What resources do you need to implement your project? What resources can you use for a non-federal match?
- Would others profit from knowing about your initiative? If so, how do you plan to get the word out?
- How will you measure and evaluate your project's outcomes?

How can you identify potential federal programs?

Once you have a good idea of what your project should look like and what resources it requires, it is time to explore federal programs and figure out what programs, if any, can help you achieve your goals. Besides this guide, there are many ways to locate resources potentially useful to you. Ask colleagues doing similar work about who has funded their work, and make use of reference sections in larger public libraries, most university main libraries, and the development office of any large university. These reference sites often have many useful directories, some dealing with private sources and others with federal ones.

Just a few sources include the following: The Foundation Directory; the National Directory of Corporate Giving; Complete Grants Sourcebook for Higher Education; Directory of Research Grants; Funding Sources for Community and Economic Development; Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance; The Federal Register; Federal Support for Nonprofits; Government Assistance Almanac; Government Giveaways for Entrepreneurs; Guide to Federal Funding for Governments and Nonprofits; and the Guide to Federal Funding for Education.

Many resources are available on the Internet, including:

- The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, <http://12.46.245.173/cfda/cfda.html>
- The Federal Register, <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/>
- A site for federal grants in all agencies, <http://www.grants.gov>
- The Foundation Center, which includes lists and indices of private foundations <http://www.fdncenter.org>
- Building Better Rural Places, which can be downloaded from <http://attra.ncat.org/guide>.

Many other private and public resources at the state and local levels are not covered in this guide. Contact your State Department of Agriculture, State Forester, State Rural Development Office, local Extension Office, local conservation office and Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) coordinator to explore those possibilities. Also, asking yourself who might have a stake in the outcomes of your work might suggest additional potential funding sources.

How can you decide which programs are most appropriate for your needs?

Identifying programs in this guide and from other sources whose purposes and available resources suit your objectives is an art form. Instead of wasting your time chasing programs that have incompatible goals, a little methodical research will help you assess how well your project fits within various programs.

You may want to talk with program staff, people previously funded, or organizations that have worked with a program to decide whether there is a fit and if so, how to argue for it. It comes down to asking good questions and thinking strategically. For example:

- What are the program's stated mission and objectives? What projects has it funded or collaborated with in the past? Is the form of assistance appropriate to your needs? (Think creatively about your project's needs. The problems for which you seek help from federal resources are likely complex, and often more than one type of assistance may contribute to their solution.)
- What are the program's funding pool, percentage of applicants who typically get funded, average funding amounts, and duration of program grants?
- What are eligibility requirements, financial match requirements, and restrictions on a program's use? Is funding available up front or (more typically) on a reimbursement basis?
- Are deadlines for applying and the time-frame for funding appropriate to your project timeline? Does the program fund multi-year projects? Do past grantees feel that a program's reporting requirements are reasonable and the program well-administered?

What are some hints for submitting successful applications?

Once you have designed a good project, prepare it for submission to any program to which you're applying so that it stands the greatest chance of being approved. Make sure it is written according to any format requirements.

Identify the central points you want to make, including how your proposal addresses a program's key goals. Be precise and accurate; do not be tempted to exaggerate the need or over-promise results. Use clear, concise language to

make your application or proposal readable. It is smart to have your application reviewed by someone whose editing skills you trust. Is it clear? Readable? Grammatically correct?

Pay close attention to formatting, deadline, non-federal monetary match and other stated requirements. Be sure that your budget is accurate, clear, and is accompanied by a budget narrative to clarify any points you think could be misunderstood by reviewers. And, of course, do not be daunted by having to readjust your proposal for each program to which you submit it.

Make sure you understand the review process. Is it based on a review by only a few people, or will the review be more comprehensive? If the contact person makes funding decisions, get to know their preferences. Under any circumstances, call program staff if you have questions about the application process. Of course, always be pleasant and not overbearing in discussing your project.

Finally, but very importantly – do not be discouraged! Many successfully funded grants and applications for federal resources are the result

of earlier failed attempts. Understanding why your earlier efforts were rejected is likely to help in future ones. Be sure to ask.

Getting a copy of the guide

To obtain a free copy of this guide, please contact **ATTRA**, the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service, at P.O. Box 3657, Fayetteville, AR 72702, 1-800-346-9140, fax (406) 494-2905, or email debbier@ncat.org. Also, look for the entire guide on **ATTRA's website** at <http://attra.ncat.org/guide>.

Workshops on using the guide

The Michael Fields Agricultural Institute (MFAI) offers workshops to help use this guide. The workshops cover how to envision and design sound projects; identify programs offering resources; and maximize your chances of submitting successful proposals.

For more information, contact Margaret Krome, MFAI Agricultural Policy Coordinator, at (608) 238-1440; mkrome@inxpress.net.

Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA)

Providing cost-share payments to agricultural producers to voluntarily address issues such as water management, water quality, and erosion control by incorporating conservation into their farming operations

AMA is available in 15 states where participation in the Federal Crop Insurance Program is historically low: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has leadership for the conservation provisions of AMA. The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is responsible for an organic certification cost-share program. The Risk Management Agency (RMA) is responsible for mitigation of financial risk through an insurance cost-share program.

Under AMA, producers may build or improve water management structures or irrigation structures; plant trees for windbreaks or to improve water quality; and mitigate risk through production diversification or resource conservation practices, including soil erosion control, integrated pest management, or transition to organic farming.

Application and Financial Information

Applicants may request AMA assistance at any time by submitting an application to the local NRCS or conservation district office. The application (form CCC-1200) is available at the local USDA Service Center or on the Web at <http://www.sc.egov.usda.gov>.

A conservation plan is required for the area covered in the application and becomes the basis for developing the AMA contract. NRCS will work with the landowner to develop a conservation plan. Landowners must agree to maintain cost-shared practices for the life of the practice. Contracts are for 3 to 10 years. Incentives payments are permitted under AMA.

The NRCS state conservationist, in consultation with the State Technical Committee, will determine eligible structural and/or vegetative conservation practices using a locally led process. The federal cost-share is 75 percent of the cost of an eligible practice. Participants will be paid based upon certification of completion of the approved practice.

AMA is budgeted at \$20 million per year. The total AMA payments (from NRCS, AMS, and RMA) shall not exceed \$50,000 per participant for any fiscal year.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Applicants must own or control the land and agree to implement specific eligible conservation practices. Applicants must meet the Food Security Act's definition of "person." Eligible land includes:

- Cropland
- Hayland
- Pasture and rangeland
- Land used for subsistence purposes

Other land (such as forestland) that produces crops or livestock where risk may be mitigated through operation diversification or change in resource conservation practices

Contact

The NRCS or the local conservation district can provide more information. The USDA Service Center is listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Internet

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/ama/>

Agriculture Risk Management Education Competitive Grants Program (RME)

*Providing comprehensive risk management education
for agricultural producers in the United States*

Section 133 of the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000 amended the Federal Crop Insurance Act to establish a competitive grants program that would educate agricultural producers about the full range of risk management activities. This work is being conducted by four "RME Centers" in the Northeastern, Southern, North Central, and Western Regions of the United States.

The regional centers conduct projects within their region and may enter into multi-regional projects with other centers. These projects are to be solicited and selected for funding by the RME Center recipient through a competitive process.

Project Examples

Examples of the RMC grant program include:

- In Kentucky, Risk Management Education funds are supporting the efforts of 132 para-professionals trained to help limited-resource families. As a result of the training, the 132 "teachers" are expected to provide one-on-one educational services to 4,500 limited-resource families annually.
- As in many states, Georgia officials integrate risk management education into numerous outreach opportunities. The many activities for Georgia producers include training offered in:
 - Farm financial record keeping using Quicken; five sessions with hands-on training for producers
 - Total quality management, to prepare vegetable and fruit farmers to withstand the risks and challenges involved in the export market
 - Tactical risk management education workshops; three workshops on marketing and production risk targeting Georgia row crop producers

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Applications may be submitted by qualified public and private entities. This includes all colleges and universities; federal, state, and local agencies; nonprofit and for-profit private organizations or corporations, and other entities. Applicants are encouraged to recognize the risk management education needs of all producers, including small-scale and minority producers and women, while giving special consideration to educational needs of producers who have had limited exposure to risk management concepts, tools, and strategies.

Priority will be given to projects that recognize and document the RME needs of producers as they exist at regional, state, and local levels, and propose effective educational programs that address those needs. Regionally based programs should be flexible while addressing special needs as determined by producer audiences; commodity mixes; types of risks associated with production, marketing, financial, legal and human resource conditions; and/or other factors that hold the greatest potential for assisting producers.

Three types of grants are funded by the program:

- **County/Regional Level Program Grants:** For projects designed to deliver risk management education at the local level to some targeted audience. These grants are intended to fund individual meetings and will require less paperwork in the application.
- **Small- and Limited-Resource Producer Grants:** For programs that target the specific risk management needs of small and limited-resource producers. These grants will be larger in scope, state wide or multi-state, and applications should address the marketing and financial education needs of this group of producers.

- **Unrestricted Risk Management**

Education Grants: For general risk management education programs in the region that identify needs of producers.

Program funds may not be used to renovate or refurbish research, education, or extension space; to buy or install fixed equipment in such space; or to plan, repair, rehabilitate, acquire, or construct buildings or facilities. CSREES does not require matching support for this program, and matching resources will not be factored into the review process as evaluation criteria.

Application and Financial Information

Grants are awarded regionally through an annual competitive review process. Details of this process may vary between regions. Contact the appropriate Risk Management Education Center (see list below) for specific information about the application process, such as deadlines, types of projects sought, and application procedures.

Contact

Ken Stokes, Director
Southern Region Risk Management Education Center
Texas Cooperative Extension
1229 N US Hwy 281
Stephenville, TX 76401
Phone: (254) 968-4144; Fax: (254) 965-3759
<http://srrme.tamu.edu>

Doug Jose, Director
North Central Risk Management Education Center
University of Nebraska
308A Filley Hall
Lincoln, NE 68583
Phone: (402) 472-2039
<http://www.farmdoc.uiuc.edu/ncrisk>

Jon Newkirk, Director
Western Center for Risk Management Education
Washington State University Cooperative Extension
222 N Havana
Spokane, WA 99202
Phone: (509) 477-2168; Fax: (509) 477-2197
<http://westrme.wsu.edu>

Don Tilmon, Director
Northeast Center for Risk Management Education
University of Delaware
226 Townsend Hall
Newark, DE 19717-1303
Phone: (302) 831-6540; Fax: (302) 831-0857
<http://www.necrme.org>

Internet

<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/funding.cfm>

Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)

Offering grants to agencies and organizations in a 13-state area for projects that promote economic and social development

In 1965, Congress established the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) to support economic and social development in the Appalachian Region. Each year, Congress appropriates funds, which ARC distributes among its member states. The Appalachian governors submit to ARC their priorities and spending plans for the year, including lists of projects they recommend for funding.

The spending plans are reviewed and approved at a meeting of the 14 Commission members, the governors of the 13 Appalachian states, and a federal co-chairman. Citizens participate as members of local development districts and multi-county agencies with boards made up of elected officials, businesspeople, and members of organizations.

ARC programs are divided into two areas: a highway program, which focuses on the construction of a 3,025-mile highway system; and a community and human development program, which seeks to create sustained local economic growth. An integral part of ARC's mission is to build partnerships and forge alliances for regional collaboration among the 410 counties that ARC serves.

Each year, ARC awards grants that address a variety of needs in the 13-state Appalachian Region, such as reducing school dropout rates, providing job training, building water and sewer systems, developing telecommunications networks, training emerging community leaders, helping start and expand new businesses, and making health and dental care more accessible.

Because each state sets its own priorities for use of ARC development funds, agriculture and forest projects must be on that state's agenda to warrant support from ARC. Although ARC has supported projects aimed at agriculture and forest production, such projects represent a small proportion of total projects funded.

At least 50 percent of ARC's grant funding goes to projects that benefit distressed counties

and areas. Economically distressed counties account for about one-fourth of the 410 counties in the Appalachian Region. ARC also provides administrative support for 72 local development districts, which work with local citizens to determine local needs and priorities. In addition, ARC has launched a multi-year, \$25 million entrepreneurship initiative to help start and expand more homegrown businesses in Appalachia.

Project Examples

Examples of projects funded by ARC include:

- Rural Johnson County High School in Tennessee received ARC and corporate grants to create an Aquacenter in the school's Alternative Farming Center. The \$500,000 grant sought to offer an alternative to tobacco as a major cash crop for young producers in the region. Students learned to raise tilapia, striped bass, and crappie along with lettuce, tomatoes, and other produce in the school's greenhouse as part of the district's vocational education program.
- ARC granted \$200,000 to Pennsylvania's Hardwood Development Council, a 21-member board dedicated to adding value to lumber products and increasing jobs in the state's forest industry. The grant funded workshops to help wood manufacturers: identify new markets for wood products; pay for a market analysis of the state's hardwood industry; analyze skills required for secondary processing jobs and the state's ability to provide training for those jobs; and develop a comprehensive listing of existing logger training programs.
- An ARC grant to the Kentucky International Trade Office was aimed at supporting a program to help small- and medium-sized businesses conduct international trade. The program sought to ensure that businesses have the information they need to take advantage of trade opportunities. Assistance included

workshops, seminars, training, market identification and research, financing assistance, and development of industry consortia.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

ARC program funds may be used only for projects to be carried out within the 410 counties in the 13 states designated by Congress as part of the Appalachian Region. The Appalachian Region encompasses 200,000 square miles along the spine of the Appalachian Mountains from southern New York to northern Mississippi. The region includes all of West Virginia and parts of twelve other states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

All grant requests must originate from the states and are approved initially by a state's governor. ARC program grants can be awarded to state or local agencies and governmental bodies (such as economic development authorities), local governing boards (such as county councils), and nonprofit organizations (such as schools or non-governmental organizations). Program grants are not made to individuals or to private, for-profit corporations

Because states originate all ARC program grants, a potential applicant must apply to the

program manager in that state. Potential applicants should also contact the local development district serving their county for guidance on a project's eligibility for funding and for assistance in preparing a grant application. Applicants should note that a majority of ARC funding is dedicated to providing basic infrastructure for rural communities and settlements.

Contact

To start the application process, contact the ARC program manager in your state. Also approach the local development district serving your county for guidance on your project's eligibility for funding. Program managers are listed on ARC's website at www.arc.gov.

Faye Kann, Director
National Program Office
Program Operations Division
Appalachian Regional Commission
1666 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Suite 700
Washington, DC 20235
Phone: (202) 884-7760; Fax: (202) 884-7682
E-mail: fkann@arc.gov

Internet

www.arc.gov/

Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA)

*Providing free technical information
to producers and information providers
on a wide variety of sustainable farming topics*

ATTRA is the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service that provides information to those engaged in or serving commercial agriculture, such as farmers, ranchers, extension agents, farm organizations, and farm-based businesses. Clients can call in requests on a toll-free telephone line, use the website that features regular updates, and learn about workshops featuring technical presentations by staff.

ATTRA offers a wide variety of information on sustainable agriculture, from horticultural and agronomic crops to livestock and farming systems. ATTRA's services seek to help U.S. farmers increase profitability and provide more healthful food for consumers while becoming better stewards of the natural resources and environment of America's farmlands.

Since its inception in 1987, ATTRA's staff of friendly, resourceful specialists has responded to more than 200,000 requests from callers on how to:

- Improve farm income with a diversity of crops and livestock
- Reduce dependence on costly off-farm inputs
- Assess new marketing methods
- Produce alternative crops and livestock
- Institute organic farming practices
- Incorporate value-added and farm-processed products
- Improve soil fertility and water quality
- Rejuvenate rural America through agricultural enterprises

Information Available

ATTRA specializes in responding to questions about specific sustainable enterprises or practices. Staff will research the question, summarize findings in writing, and compile supporting literature as appropriate to accompany the report, which a caller receives by mail. Publications based on frequently requested topics are also available.

Financial Information

Funding for fiscal year 2004 is \$2.5 million through USDA's Rural Business-Cooperative Service to support the informational and educational work of 48 assigned staff. The program is operated by the nonprofit National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT).

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

ATTRA provides information to anyone involved in U.S. commercial agriculture. This includes farmers, ranchers, extension agents, farm organizations, farm-based businesses, information providers, and others who serve farmers.

Contact

People involved in commercial agriculture in the United States may request information by calling (800) 346-9140 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. (Central Time) Monday through Friday, or by visiting the ATTRA website.

Internet

www.attra.ncat.org

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP)

*The first-ever USDA program,
other than farm credit/debt financing programs,
targeted specifically to beginning farmers and ranchers*

The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP), authorized in Section 7405 of the 2002 Farm Bill, is the first-ever USDA program, other than farm credit/debt financing programs, targeted specifically to beginning farmers and ranchers.

To be administered by the USDA's Cooperative State Education and Extension Service (CSREES), this new grants program will fund initiatives directed at new farming opportunities in the areas of education, extension, outreach, and technical assistance.

The new program is targeted especially to collaborative local, state, and regionally based networks and partnerships. Such networks and partnerships may include cooperative extension; community-based, nongovernmental organizations; relevant USDA and state agencies; universities and community colleges; and other appropriate partners.

Project Examples

Because as of this writing the BFRDP has not yet been funded nor had rules established for its implementation, the following examples reflect services provided by the BFRDP-funded partnerships envisioned during its passage in the Farm Bill:

- Entrepreneurial, financial management, business training
- Mentoring, apprenticeship, and internship programs and referral services
- "Land link" assistance to match retiring farmers and ranchers with new farmers and ranchers
- Risk management education

- Innovative farm transfer tools and transition strategies
- Whole farm planning, training, and technical assistance with holistic conservation system
- Enterprise diversification and alternative marketing strategies
- Curriculum development
- Other means of assisting beginning farmers and ranchers

The program also establishes education "teams," consisting of representatives of colleges and universities, cooperative extension, non-governmental organizations, and agencies, whose task is to develop curriculum and educational modules geared to different regions and farming systems for use in a variety of educational settings and available online from USDA.

Application and Financial Information

Not less than 25 percent of funds appropriated for this program are targeted to limited resource and socially disadvantaged beginning farmers and ranchers and to farm workers seeking to become farmers or ranchers. There is a 25 percent cash or in-kind matching requirement. Grant terms may not exceed 3 years.

At the time of printing of this directory, other information about this program was unavailable.

Contact

Traci Buckner
Center for Rural Affairs
P.O. Box 136
Lyons, NE 68038
Phone: (402) 687-2103
E-mail: tracib@cfra.org

Biomass Research and Development Initiative (BRDI)

Supporting research, development, and demonstrations on cost-effective ways to produce alternative fuels and chemicals from biomass resources

Authorized in Section 9008 of the 2002 Farm Bill, the Biomass Research and Development Initiative offers grants to eligible entities to carry out research, development, and demonstrations on cost-effective ways to produce ethanol and other fuels and chemicals from biomass resources such as agricultural and forestry residues or fast-growing trees and grasses. This requires efficient technology to extract and use the sugars in cellulose and hemicellulose—the fibrous bulk of plant material. Developing this technology is the primary focus of the Biofuels Program.

The program funds research on biobased products, bioenergy, biofuels, biopower, and related processes. The program is conducted as a collaboration between the Departments of Agriculture (USDA) and Energy (DOE) to expand the nation's overall supply of clean and affordable energy. Biomass is defined as organic non-fossil material of biological origin constituting a renewable energy source.

Project Examples

Selected projects for the 2003 fiscal year were in seven areas: crosscutting, product uses, thermal conversion, bioconversion, feedstocks, anaerobic, and biorefineries. Some examples:

- The Metabolix Corporation in Cambridge, MA, was funded to develop genetically engineered switchgrass that can be processed in a biorefinery to produce a family of biodegradable, biobased polymers, polyhydroxyalkanoates (PHAs), and energy.
- Utah State University was funded to explore technical systems and market analyses of a full-scale anaerobic digester dairy farm system that generated significant

amounts of electricity (two 80 kW microturbines) that will be fed into the power grid.

- A Tesuque, NM, company was funded to design a district heating system for the downtown area of Santa Fe, using woody biomass from overstocked fire-prone forests surrounding the community. Beneficial impacts on output, earnings, and jobs for the optimized model will be quantified, and the results will be used to teach other communities how to develop their local economies and improve their energy security using renewable biomass energy.

All 2003 grant recipients are listed at

<http://www.usda.gov/news/releases/2003/09/0306.htm>.

Application and Financial Information

All eligible applications are evaluated in a joint USDA/DOE technical merit review process, as well as reviews by each department based on cost and programmatic priorities. The DOE selected four winning projects and the USDA fifteen.

The joint solicitation process was managed by the USDA in 2003, and in 2004 will be managed by the Department of Energy. It will continue to have alternating departmental management each year. In 2003, the program awarded \$23 million in biomass research funding to 19 project selected from about 400 applications.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Eligible applicants include private sector entities, institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, national laboratories, federal and state research agencies, and consortiums of two or more of these entities. Grants are awarded competitively based on technical merit and pro-

gram priorities identified in the solicitation package. This solicitation requires a minimum non-federal share of 20 percent of the total project cost. The federal share of each grant is expected to range from \$250,000 to \$2 million, with the work proposed to be completed within a 3-year timeframe.

Contact

The National Biomass Coordination Office serves as the Executive Secretariat for the Biomass Research and Development Initiative, conducting the day-to-day activities of the Initiative. Staffed by both the Departments of Energy and Agriculture, the Coordination Office is located at the DOE headquarters in Washington, DC.

National Biomass Coordination Office
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Mail-Code EE-1
Washington, DC 20585
Phone: (202) 586-7766; Fax: (202) 586-5010
E-mail: sara.mitcho@ee.doe.gov

The principal contact at USDA is Glenn Carpenter at (301) 504-2212, with the NRCS Animal Husbandry and Clean Water Division.

Internet

<http://www.bioproducts-bioenergy.gov/>

Information about additional energy grants provided by the Farm Bill and about USDA's energy policy can be found at <http://www.usda.gov/farmbill> and <http://www.usda.gov/energy/>, respectively.

Business and Industrial (B&I) Guaranteed Loan Program

Guaranteeing loans by commercial lenders to rural businesses

The Business and Industrial (B&I) Guaranteed Loan program guarantees loans by commercial local lenders to businesses in rural areas. By guaranteeing loans made by commercial lenders against a portion (up to a maximum of 90 percent) of loss resulting from borrower default, the B&I Guaranteed Loan program is meant to expand the available credit for businesses. B&I guarantees can result in a number of benefits to such businesses.

The loan guarantee may be used for business and industrial acquisitions, construction, conversion, expansion, repair, modernization, or development costs; purchase of equipment, machinery, or supplies; startup costs and working capital; processing and marketing facilities; pollution control and abatement; and refinancing for viable projects, under certain conditions.

The 1996 Farm Bill created another eligible use for B&I Guaranteed Loan funds: the purchase of startup cooperative stock for family-sized farms where commodities are produced to be processed by the cooperative. Ineligible loan purposes include lines of credit, agricultural production that is not part of an integrated business involved in processing of agricultural products, or any project likely to transfer employment from one area to another.

Project Examples

Examples of projects that have been funded include:

- In Monroe, WA, Galaxy Cinemas Northwest, LLC, was granted a \$5 million B&I Guaranteed Loan to provide working capital and to refinance a short-term construction loan for a 12-screen movie theater complex.
- In Perham, MN, the Barrel O'Fun Snack Food Company was granted a loan of \$11,750,000 to construct a 95,000 square foot building adjacent to the existing building. The building will contain all production

for snack food products. The existing building will be converted to warehouse space for finished products. Use of funds will also include the purchase of new equipment for production.

- In Stanley, WI, ACE Ethanol, LLC was granted a B&I Guaranteed Loan for debt refinancing. This was an integral part of a \$35 million expansion project, doubling the plant products from 15 million to 30 million gallons per year.
- In Joplin, MO, Hampshire Pet Products was loaned \$9.5 million to restructure outstanding debt and to buy additional equipment to expand production and employment. It manufactures dog biscuits and treats for both private label retail companies as well as national brand companies.

Application and Financial Information

As is the case with SBA loan guarantees, the business must first find a bank or lending institution willing to extend a loan subject to a guarantee. The bank then makes a joint application with the borrower to the USDA state or district office of Rural Development. The state office generally has loan approval authority.

Applications for loan guarantees over the states' loan approval authority are submitted to the national office. They are available throughout the year and are accepted on an ongoing basis. Loan guarantees are to be approved within 60 days subject to the availability of funds. Pre-application reviews and advice are also available through state offices.

The maximum aggregate B&I guaranteed loan(s) amount is \$10 million to any one borrower, although the program administrator can grant up to \$25 million. For loans of \$2 million or less, the maximum portion of guarantee is 90 percent; for loans over \$2 million but not over \$5 million, the maximum is 80 percent; and for loans in excess of \$5 million, the maximum is 70 percent.

Maximum repayment terms are 7 years for working capital, 15 years (or useful life) for machinery and equipment, and 30 years for real estate. Collateral must be sufficient to protect the interests of the lender and the government and usually include personal and/or corporate guarantees.

A minimum of 10 percent tangible balance sheet equity is required for existing businesses, and 20 percent for new businesses. Feasibility studies may be required.

The interest rate is negotiated between the lender and borrower and may be fixed or variable. The lender addresses the business adequacy of equity, cash flow, collateral, history, management, and the current status of the industry in a written credit analysis. Lenders are expected to service, and if necessary, liquidate loans, with USDA's Rural Development's concurrence.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

B&I loans can be guaranteed in rural areas outside of cities with a population of 50,000 or more and the immediately adjacent urbanized area. Priority is given to applications for loans in rural communities of 25,000 or less.

Any legal entity—including individuals, public or private organizations, and federally recognized Indian tribal groups—may borrow funds. Charitable, religious or fraternal institutions or organizations cannot borrow money. Local economic development organizations and investors can also be considered. There is no size restriction on the business. Inability to obtain other credit is not a requirement.

Authorized lenders include federal or state chartered banks, credit unions, insurance companies, savings and loan associations, the Farm Credit Bank, other Farm Credit System institutions with direct lending authority, and nontraditional lenders approved on an individual lender basis.

Contact

The 47 state offices for USDA's Rural Development Program (formerly the Farmers Home Administration) deliver the B&I program (along with other business and community programs) to potential borrowers and lenders. For more information and applications, contact the state USDA Rural Development office or any Rural Development field office.

These offices can also provide contact information for local banks and lending institutions that have experience with the B&I program. Applications are not available through the national program office, but inquiries are welcome.

Carolyn Parker, Division Director
National Program Office
Business and Industry Division
USDA, Rural Business-Cooperative Service
1400 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20250-0700
Phone: (202) 690-4103; Fax: (202) 720-6003

Internet

www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/busp/b&i_gar.htm

Coastal Program

Conserving coastal ecosystems to benefit fish, wildlife, and people

The Coastal Program focuses on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's efforts to restore and protect bays, estuaries, and watersheds in 16 high-priority coastal ecosystems. The program is guided by 4 goals:

- Serve coastal communities by providing assessment and planning tools to identify priority habitats that should be protected and restored
- Conserve pristine coastal habitats through voluntary conservation easements and locally initiated land acquisition
- Restore degraded coastal wetland, upland, and stream habitats by working with partners to implement on-the-ground projects
- Focus resources through conservation alliances that leverage the financial and technical resources of our partners and multiply the impact of the taxpayer's dollar

Coastal Program Locations

Albemarle/Pamlico Sounds, NC
Chesapeake Bay, MD/VA/PA
Cook Inlet, AK
Delaware Bay
Florida Gulf Coast
Galveston Bay/Texas Coast
Great Lakes
Gulf of Maine
Oregon Coast
Pacific Islands
Puget Sound, WA
San Francisco Bay, CA
South Carolina Coast
South Florida/Everglades
Southern California/San Diego Bay
Southern New England/New York Bight

Project Examples

Examples of projects funded include:

- **Hawksbill Turtle Nesting Beaches in Hawaii:** The Coastal Program worked with a school to support a turtle nesting beach

volunteer monitoring program. Volunteers monitored and protected turtle nesting activities on several hawksbill sea turtle beaches on the Big Island and also cleared invasive weeds encroaching on 20 acres of nesting habitat. The National Park Service also contributed to the project.

- **Removal of Ballou Dam on Yokum Brook in Massachusetts:** The Coastal Program contributed to the removal of a barrier to fish passage on Yokum Brook. The project should restore 5 miles of in-stream habitat to benefit Atlantic salmon and other anadromous (migratory) fish. Many partners contributed to this project, including Trout Unlimited, the U.S. Geological Survey, American Rivers, the Town of Becket, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, and the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs in Massachusetts.
- **Graveyard Creek Restoration in Wisconsin:** This Coastal Program worked with the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa to restore anadromous fish passage on Graveyard Creek. Beaver dams were removed at selected locations. Bank stabilization using natural vegetation and in-stream work restored the original channel. Past logging practices and beaver activity have damaged fish habitat in the creek, which has high potential for coaster brook trout. About 2.5 miles of in-stream and streamside habitat were enhanced with this project.

Application and Financial Information

Contact the appropriate regional office (see list in this entry). Your regional contact should be able to give you an idea of the appropriateness of your proposed project and the probability of its support by the Coastal Program.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Eligible clients are federal, state, interstate, and intrastate agencies; local and tribal governments; sponsored organizations; public nonprofit institutes and organizations (such as conservation organizations, watershed councils, land trusts, schools, and institutions of higher learning); federally recognized Indian tribes; U.S. territories and possessions; private landowners including individuals, families, minority groups, and businesses.

Contact

Martha Naley
National Program Office
Chief, Branch of Habitat Restoration
4401 North Fairfax Drive, Room 400
Arlington, VA 22203
Phone: (703) 358-2201; Fax: (703) 358-2232

Please visit website for list of Coastal Program offices near you.

Internet

www.fws.gov/cep/cepcode.html

Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program

*Providing grants to develop community food projects
in low-income areas*

This program supports the development of community food projects designed to meet the food needs of low-income people; to increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for their own needs; and to promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues. It also supports efforts to meet specific state, local, or neighborhood food and agriculture needs for improving and developing infrastructure; planning for long-term solutions; or creating innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers.

Other objectives of the program are to: develop linkages between two or more sectors of the food system; support the development of entrepreneurial projects; develop innovative linkages between the for-profit and nonprofit food sectors; and encourage long-term planning activities and multi-system, inter-agency collaboration.

A match of 50 percent non-federal support of the project (dollar for dollar) is required during the term of the grant. The non-federal share may be provided through payment in cash or in-kind contributions in the form of fairly evaluated facilities, equipment, or services. The non-federal share may be derived from state or local governments, or from private sources.

Project Examples

Some projects funded since 1996:

- In its first year, the Garden City Harvest Project initiated by *Missoula Nutrition Resources in Missoula, MT*, put 6 acres of undeveloped land into production for gardens and community supported agriculture (CSA) projects that helped supply food to 165 households and 57,000 pounds of produce to low-income families and emergency feeding organizations. The project also implemented an ecological agriculture program for 50 University of Montana students.
- CFP funding for the *Rural Development Center in Salinas, CA*, aided more than 100

farmers with training and technical support, permitted 30 families to begin gardening, helped start a farmers' market serving farm worker households, brought 100 households into a community supported agriculture project, involved 90 students in a school gardening effort, and established a broadly representative Food Policy Council.

- Nearly two dozen low-income families received fresh produce through a subsidized community supported agriculture (CSA) effort operated by the *Practical Farmers of Iowa in Boone, IA*. In addition, with CFP support, the project initiated a farmers' market in downtown Ames, helped producers broker "All Iowa Grown" meals at hotels and conference centers, offered nutrition education and community gardening opportunities for children and adults, and organized a local food system conference that has become an annual event.
- A total of 85 youth received instruction in organic production, composting, planting, and insect identification as part of the *Youth Farm and Market Project in St. Paul, MN*. The training for urban farming, along with visits to a rural farm camp, helped youth gain experience in marketing produce from local farmers through public schools, a restaurant, and a delicatessen. Youth also took home fresh produce to increase consumption of organic vegetables, and received cooking lessons from a professional chef on how to use them.

Application and Financial Information

Each year the Community Food Projects program guidelines are published on the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension website at <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/funding.cfm>. The program also maintains a list of people who will be notified by e-mail about the start of the solicitation period. You may ask to be placed on this e-mail notification list by calling or e-mailing etuckermanty@csrees.usda.gov.

All proposal guidelines and submission deadlines are outlined in the Request for Applications. Formal proposals are submitted to the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) of USDA. Grant awards are announced within 90 to 180 days from the deadline for submission of proposals.

Proposals are reviewed by CSREES staff members with the assistance and advice of peer specialists and are evaluated on the basis of multiple criteria including the project's ability to:

- Help facilitate low-income people in the proposed community to provide for their own food needs
- Promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition needs
- Become self-sustaining once federal funding ends

Also reviewed will be the organizational and staff qualifications and experience of the sponsoring organization and the extent to which the proposed project contributes to:

- Developing linkages between two or more sectors of the food system
- Supporting the development of entrepreneurial projects
- Developing innovative linkages between the for-profit and nonprofit food sectors
- Encouraging long-term planning activities and multi-system, interagency approaches
- Incorporating linkages to one or more ongoing USDA themes or initiatives referred to in the program guidelines and/or annual proposal solicitation

Proposals must also indicate that projects have the dollar-for-dollar match from non-federal sources that are required for this program. Projects may be funded for 1 to 3 years. Past grants have ranged from \$10,000 to \$250,000. In fiscal year 2002, the Community Food Project Competitive Grants Program was funded at \$5 million. It is anticipated that it will be funded at \$5 million each year through fiscal year 2007.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Proposals may be submitted by private nonprofit entities for projects that benefit low-income people. Because projects must promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues, applicants are encouraged to seek and create partnerships among public, private nonprofit and private for-profit organizations or firms.

To be further eligible for a grant, a private nonprofit applicant must meet three mandatory requirements:

- Have experience in the area of:
 - Community food work, particularly concerning small and medium-sized farms, including the provision of food to people in low-income communities and the development of new markets in low-income communities for agricultural producers
 - Job training and business development activities in low-income communities;
- Demonstrate competency to implement a project, provide fiscal accountability and oversight, collect data, and prepare reports and other appropriate documentation
- Demonstrate a willingness to share information with researchers, practitioners, and other interested parties

Community food projects are intended to take a comprehensive approach to developing long-term solutions that help to ensure food security in communities by linking the food sector to community development, economic opportunity, and environmental enhancement. Comprehensive solutions may include elements such as:

- Improved access to high quality, affordable food among low-income households
- Support for local food systems, from urban gardening to local farms that provide high quality fresh food, ideally with minimal adverse environmental impact
- Expanded economic opportunities for community residents through local business or other economic development, improved employment opportunities, job training, youth apprenticeship, school-to-work transition, and the like

Any solution proposed must address community food needs.

Contact

Dr. Elizabeth Tuckermanty, Program Director
National Program Office
USDA-CSREES, Stop 2241
Washington, DC 20250-2241
Phone: (202) 205-0241
E-mail: etuckermanty@csrees.usda.gov

Internet

<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/funding.cfm>

Community Food Security Initiative (CFSI)

Helping nonprofit groups, faith-based organizations, state and local government agencies, tribes, and individual citizens fight hunger, improve nutrition, strengthen local food systems, and empower low-income families to move toward self-sufficiency

The USDA's Community Food Security Initiative seeks to cut hunger in America in half by the year 2015 by creating and expanding grass-roots partnerships that build local food systems and reduce hunger. USDA is joining with states, municipalities, nonprofit groups, and the private sector to strengthen local food systems by replicating best practices of existing efforts and by catalyzing new community commitments to fight hunger.

Goals:

- Creating new — and enhancing existing — local infrastructures to reduce hunger and food insecurity
- Increasing economic and job security by helping low-income people obtain living-wage jobs and become self-sufficient
- Strengthening the federal nutrition assistance safety net by supporting the full and efficient use of programs such as food stamps, WIC, school meals, summer feeding, and TEFAP
- Bolstering supplemental food provided by nonprofit groups by aiding food recovery, gleaning, and food donation programs
- Improving community food production and marketing by aiding projects that grow, process, and distribute food locally
- Boosting education and awareness by increasing efforts to inform the public about nutrition, food safety, and food security
- Improving research, monitoring, and evaluation efforts to help communities assess and strengthen food security

Methods:

- Catalyzing the development of new partnerships on the local, state, and federal levels to help communities reduce hunger
- Improving the coordination between existing USDA programs — such as nutrition

assistance programs, community food grants, ongoing research, farmers' markets, and food recovery projects — and related federal, state, and community initiatives

- Expanding technical assistance to states, communities, and nonprofit groups to build long-term local structures to increase food security
- Increasing public awareness of the causes of food insecurity and highlighting innovative community solutions to hunger

Project Examples

The Florida Certified Organic Growers and Consumers, Inc. of Gainesville, FL, was awarded \$175,000 for 3 years to facilitate linkages between the public school system, social service agencies, farmers, local businesses, and private citizens to address their food, farm, and nutrition needs. Activities include local farm and farmers' market tours; a local farm awareness campaign; a food and garden production school-based curriculum that includes principles of math, science and language arts; nutrition and food preparation education; and a farm apprenticeship program. Partners will also explore expanding direct farm marketing to schools and other local markets.

The Mississippi Food Network of Jackson, MS, was given a grant of \$110,000 for 2 years to provide income and means for self-reliance for low-income households by breaking down cultural barriers in the African-American community to growing one's own food; by teaching sustainable agriculture practices suited to low-income growers; and by increasing community gardens, market gardens, and a student-run seedling project. New farmers' markets will be setup and linked with the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. Community gardens in Head Start Centers will be linked with nutrition edu-

cation. Best practices models will be evaluated for replication in other sites. Bolviar and Holmes Counties in the Mississippi Delta will be served by this project. More than 40 percent of the residents live in poverty and many suffer from serious diet-related diseases.

Bounty in the County, Inc., of Hudson, NY, was awarded \$180,000 for 2 years to create a direct marketing opportunity for the 464 farms in the county, while economically disadvantaged residents of Hudson will gain walking-distance access to a nonprofit cooperative food store. Hudson has lacked a supermarket since 1995. The project will link farmers, Workfare, job training programs, education, and creative partnerships with diverse parts of the food system, including private, public, for-profit, and not-for-profit groups. The community will increase its

self-reliance through economic development and support of local agriculture through showcasing locally grown products.

Contact

Joel Berg
Coordinator of Community Food Security
USDA
Room 536-A
14th and Independence SW
Washington, DC, 20250
Phone: (202) 720-5746; Fax: (202) 690-1131
E-mail: joel.berg@usda.gov

Internet

http://www.reeusda.gov/food_security/foodshp.htm

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

Offering contracts for highly erodible and other environmentally sensitive cropland for 10 to 15 years if landowners establish and maintain perennial vegetation and agree to leave the land idle for the length of the contract

The CRP offers landowners, operators, and tenants the opportunity to voluntarily convert land with high erosion rates and other environmentally sensitive land to permanent vegetative cover. Permanent cover options include grasses and legumes, tree plantings, and wildlife habitat. The program goals are to reduce soil erosion, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, improve water quality, protect the soils on the nation's cropland base, demonstrate good land stewardship, and improve rural aesthetics.

The program aims to protect the nation's long-term ability to produce food and fiber by effectively managing agricultural resources, reducing soil erosion, reducing sedimentation, improving water quality, creating a better habitat for fish and wildlife, providing some needed income support for farmers, and curbing production of some surplus commodities.

Financial and technical assistance is available to participants to help establish a permanent vegetative cover.

Project Examples

Projects funded include:

- Marginal cropland in Mississippi, planted to soybeans, is at continual risk of erosion because of sandy, silty soils and a slope too great for tillage. One landowner chose to convert a portion of his land to pine trees as permanent cover through CRP. The cost of planting was about \$60/acre, including the seedlings and paying a contractor for machine planting. CRP paid the landowner \$30/acre, or 50 percent of the cost of conversion, plus \$36/acre annual rental payment. The land is protected from severe erosion with tree cover, and additional income could come from thinning the trees in 13 to 16 years.

- In Wisconsin, an elderly dairy farming couple with no son or daughter to take over the farm wanted to sell their dairy operation, but could not find a young farmer interested in buying it. Their land has shallow soils, has been contour-stripped since the 1950s, and is highly erodible. The couple was able to sell their cows and machinery and put 200 acres into CRP, (leaving the remaining 100 acres in pasture and woodlot). For 10 years they will receive \$80/acre for their land, which is seeded to grass to protect it from erosion.
- In New Mexico, certain highly erodible land had a history of being cultivated when wheat prices were high and abandoned when prices dropped, leaving the topsoil exposed to wind erosion. Some of these lands were entered into CRP, enabling farmers to plant a cover grass to protect and conserve the topsoil for future cultivation after the 10 years in CRP, and they still receive income for 10 years from the land.

Application and Financial Information

To initiate the application procedure, a landowner must submit a rental rate per acre bid to the local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office that serves the area in which the farm or ranch is located during the announced sign up period. Those whose bids are accepted will be notified from 7 to 90 days from the date of submission of the application.

County FSA offices will provide producers the maximum acceptable rental rate for the acreage offered. All offers will be screened at both the local and national levels to determine the suitability of the acreage and acceptability of the rental rate bid. In addition, offers will be evaluated in terms of cost for the environmental benefits obtained.

Acres accepted will be limited to pre-announced levels for each sign up period. Annual rental payments to producers range from \$50 to \$50,000, with \$5,000 being the average nationally.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

This program serves any individual; partnership; association; Indian tribal ventures corporation; estate; trust; other business enterprise or legal entity; and, whenever applicable, a state, a political subdivision of a state, or any agency thereof owning or operating private croplands, and state or local government croplands.

Eligible owners or operators may place highly erodible or environmentally sensitive land into a 10- to 15-year contract. In return for annual payments, the participant agrees to implement a conservation plan approved by the local conservation district for converting highly erodible cropland or environmentally sensitive land to a less intensive use (that is, cropland must be planted with a vegetative cover such as perennial grasses, legumes, forbs, shrubs, or trees). Managed haying and/or grazing may be permitted on most CRP land, but there is a commensurate payment reduction.

The cropland must be owned or operated for at least 12 months before the close of the annual sign-up period, unless the land was acquired by will or succession or the FSA determines that ownership was not acquired for the purpose of placing the land in the CRP Program. Marginal pastureland enrolled in riparian buffers or other practices may also be eligible.

Contact

For more information, contact your local Farm Service Agency Office. (Consult the local phone directory under U.S. Government, U.S. Department of Agriculture.)

Bob Stephenson, Director
National Program Office
Conservation and Environmental Programs
Division
USDA/FSA/CEPD/STOP 0513
Washington, DC 20250-0513
Phone: (202) 720-6221; Fax: (202) 720-4619

Internet

www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/cepd/crpinfo.htm

Conservation Security Program (CSP)

Providing payments for producers who historically have practiced good stewardship on their agricultural lands and incentives for those who want to do more

The Conservation Security Program (CSP) is a voluntary program authorized in the 2002 Farm Security and Rural Investment Act (Farm Bill) and administered by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Unique among USDA conservation programs, CSP identifies and rewards farmers and ranchers who meet the highest standards of conservation and environmental management and creates powerful incentives for other producers to meet those same standards.

CSP is complementary to other conservation programs. Whereas other programs help establish or install conservation practices, CSP pays those who have attained a level of conservation that goes beyond minimum resource requirements for non-degradation. Payments are structured into three tiers, with higher payments made to producers demonstrating higher levels of conservation.

CSP also provides technical assistance to promote the conservation and improvement of soil, water, air, energy, plant, and animal life, and other conservation purposes.

Project Examples

Because the program was first implemented in 2004, no examples are available at the time of publication. For more information, see http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/programs_csp.html and www.mnproject.org/csp/.

Application and Financial Information

At the core of the CSP is a three-tiered system that allows farmers to participate in the program at the level they feel comfortable with.

- Under Tier 1, a farmer signs a 5-year plan that addresses soil and water quality for the part of the farm being enrolled in the program.
- Tier 2 requires more comprehensive farm-wide stewardship addressing at least soil

and water quality, and it is accompanied by higher payments.

- Tier 3 pays farmers the most and rewards stewardship, addressing all resources of concern for the entire farm.

Contact your local conservation office or the state NRCS office for details of how the program can work on your farm.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

CSP is an entitlement program, meaning it is not a competitive sign-up, and the funds must be made available to any farmer or rancher who develops an approved plan on Tribal and private working lands, for farms and ranches of all types and sizes in all 50 states, the Caribbean, and the Pacific Basin. Working lands include cropland, grassland, prairie land, improved pasture, and rangeland, as well as forested land that is an incidental part of an agricultural operation. In 2004, the first year of its implementation, the program was offered only in a few watersheds around the nation, but this is expected to change in future years.

Participation in CSP does not require participation in commodity farm programs, and CSP payments have no bearing on farm program payment limitations. Land in the Conservation Reserve Program, the Wetland Reserve Program, and the Grassland Reserve Program cannot be enrolled in CSP. However, a farmer may participate in both CSP and one of these set-aside programs.

Contact

Craig Derickson
Phone: (202) 720-3524
E-mail: craig.derrickson@usda.gov

Internet

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/index.html>

Cooperative Extension System (CES)

Providing a partnership effort in information delivery and educational support programs

The partnership occurs among federal, state, and county governments that all provide funding support and management direction to the nation's cooperative extension system. The CES network links research and outreach programs of land-grant universities to state and local needs. The structure and services provided by extension are largely determined at the state and county levels, and they vary accordingly. USDA, which has its link to extension through the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) agency, provides only general guidelines and coordination of the extension system, as well as partial funding.

A user can contact CES at the state level, the county level, or both. State extension specialists, who are also university faculty, provide in-depth information on a variety of technical subjects, including many agriculture, natural resource, and household/family topics. More than 9,000 local extension agents work in nearly 3,000 U.S. counties. In addition to paid extension staff, trained volunteers work with a number of programs, such as the youth-oriented 4-H programs.

The type of information available through extension offices and programs is very comprehensive and usually tailored in part to local information needs. In general, information and some technical assistance are available on agriculture, forestry, natural resources, gardening, household, family, and youth topics.

Extension does not normally provide financial assistance, but instead focuses on information delivery through the Internet, printed publications and newsletters, broadcast media, staff presentations at public meetings, and one-on-one assistance in person or by phone with information seekers. In some locations, diagnostic services are available for soil testing and garden or farm pests. Most extension publications and programs are available for free or at nominal cost through county or university extension offices or via Internet websites.

Project Examples

The CES has responded over the years to hundreds of thousands of questions and inquiries on literally thousands of topics, as well as proactively delivering educational programs. Many states have extension publications on alternative agricultural crops, sometimes emphasizing horticultural alternatives, sometimes alternative field crops, and sometimes alternative enterprises such as Christmas tree or mushroom production. Usually information is available in each state on developing a farm enterprise budget and/or beginning a small business. Information not available in printed form may be obtained by talking to one or more extension staff at the county or state level and asking for a resource person familiar with these topics.

Financial Information

There is generally no financial assistance available through extension, and thus no application forms. There are a variety of methods to obtain extension publications:

- Most county extension offices have available for free or at low cost copies of the extension publications available in the state, and call-in or walk-in assistance can be provided. Typically, a state-level extension publications office has a list of all currently available extension publications in that state, plus some that are regional extension publications, and will take publications orders by phone or mail.
- Contacting an extension technical staff person can lead to that person providing publications by mail.
- Many states make their publications available via the World Wide Web. If you have Internet access go to <http://www.e-answersonline.org> to see if your state's extension materials are available in electronic format.

- Finally, over-the-phone or walk-in technical assistance and other value-added topics are available from extension offices.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

CSREES programs are open to all citizens without regard to race, gender, disability, religion, age or national origin. Specific eligibility requirements can vary by program.

Contact

Contact your local county extension office (see your local government in the telephone directory), a land-grant university (call the university's main information number and ask for the exten-

sion administration office, extension publications office, or the agriculture extension office), or the national agency office listed here.

National Program Office
Cooperative State Research, Education, and
Extension Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
305A Whitten Building
1400 Independence Ave.
Washington, DC 20250-0900

Internet

National office:

<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/qlinks/extension.html>

Local office:

<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/index.html>

Cooperative Services (CS)

Helping form and operate agricultural cooperatives through research, technical assistance, information, training, educational materials, and limited funding for cooperative research agreements

The goal of the Cooperative Services program of USDA's Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS) is to help rural residents form new cooperative businesses and improve the operations of existing cooperatives. To accomplish this, Cooperative Services provides technical assistance to cooperatives and those thinking of forming cooperatives. It also conducts cooperative-related research and produces information products to promote public understanding of cooperatives.

RBS is part of USDA's Rural Development mission area, which was created in 1994 when USDA consolidated rural economic programs that had previously been scattered among various agencies. RBS encompasses the former Agricultural Cooperative Service and some of the business and economic development programs of the former Rural Development Administration and Rural Electrification Administration.

For people interested in forming new rural cooperatives, CS provides a wide range of assistance—from an initial feasibility study to the creation and implementation of a business plan. CS staff includes cooperative development specialists who do everything from identifying potential cooperative functions through developing bylaws and business plans. They also provide training for cooperative directors.

CS also provides technical assistance to existing cooperatives facing specific problems or challenges. Technical assistance could include helping a cooperative develop a strategic marketing plan to cope with new competitive forces, decide whether to merge or form a joint venture with other cooperatives, or find a way to turn the raw products of cooperative members into value-added products. These matters are often life-and-death issues not only for cooperatives, but for the rural communities in which they operate.

CS maintains a storehouse of information about cooperatives, which it makes available to the public through more than 150 research reports, educational publications and videos covering all aspects of cooperative operations. A monthly magazine, *Rural Cooperatives*, reports significant achievement by cooperatives, the most advanced thinking of cooperative leaders, and highlights of agency research, technical assistance, and educational activities.

Project Examples

Cooperative Services has provided assistance to a variety of groups of rural producers wishing to add value to their products. Current and past projects include:

- Establishing a modern, rural grocery store as a cooperative on a Native American reservation
- Helping small-scale hog producers organize a transportation and marketing cooperative to help save on costs and gain access to packers
- Assisting the formation of a cooperative for rural women who produce handcrafted gift items
- Conducting a feasibility analysis for producers of dry edible beans and helping them organize a marketing cooperative to increase their returns
- Assisting in the formation of an aquaculture cooperative to provide members a facility in which to process, package, and market crabmeat
- Working with a group of turkey farmers to form a cooperative to take over a closing processing plant, which saved and created jobs and prevented turkey farmers from losing a viable market
- Assisting the formation of vegetable marketing cooperatives to enable small tobacco farmers to diversify into a variety of alternative crops

Application and Financial Information

Except for the Rural Cooperative Development Grant Program also profiled in this directory, CS does not provide direct financial assistance. However, USDA's Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS) offers several other grant programs for rural communities that are profiled on the website: www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Cooperative Services provides a wide range of services for rural cooperatives.

Contact

CS staff members in the national office work in conjunction with cooperative development specialists at many of USDA's state Rural Development offices. Technical assistance is available through some of these offices. For edu-

cational programs and workshops, and further information about technical assistance available, please write to the national program office. For publications and videos about cooperatives, call (202) 720-7558 or see the website.

James Haskell, Assistant Deputy Administrator
National Program Office
Cooperative Services
Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA
Stop 3250
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20250-3250
Phone: (202) 720-7558; Fax: (202) 720-4641
E-mail: coopinfo@rurdev.usda.gov

Internet

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/csdir.htm>

Delta Regional Authority (DRA)

***Alleviating severe and chronic economic distress
by stimulating economic development and fostering partnerships
to improve a 240-county/parish area in an eight-state region of the Delta***

Created in 2001 and led by Federal Co-Chairman Patrick H. (Pete) Johnson and the governors of each participating state, the Delta Regional Authority serves 240 counties and parishes within the Delta areas of Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee.

DRA strives to help economically distressed communities leverage other federal and state programs that are focused on basic infrastructure development, transportation improvements, business development, and job training services. Under federal law, at least 75 percent of funds must be invested in distressed counties and parishes and pockets of poverty, with 50 percent of the funds earmarked for transportation and basic infrastructure improvements.

Project Examples

Some examples of projects funded include:

- The Southeast Missouri Regional Planning and Economic Development Commission will use a \$200,000 grant from DRA to expand the commission's loan capacity under its revolving loan fund.
- Houston, TX, has been awarded a \$211,750 grant from the Delta Regional Authority to provide funding to build right and left turning lanes from Missouri Highway 17 into the Houston Industrial Park. Funds will be also used to extend hard surfaced access roads to serve three new industries in the industrial park.
- Fredericktown, MO, will use a \$200,000 grant to upgrade the electrical transmission and substation facilities in a heavy industrial and commercial area.

Information Available

Through the DRA website, people may subscribe to an electronic project newsletter and a

separate electronic newsletter that lists grant opportunities across the United States. Webcasts are also held regularly by DRA on a host of topics related to community development.

Application and Financial Information

Application for DRA grants is to be made through the offices of governors in each of the eight states being served by the project.

Of the \$25,563,711 requested by applicants in the 2002 grant cycle, \$3,950,868 was awarded. The second largest category funded was transportation infrastructure. Business development proposals ranked third, and those for workforce training received the least amount of available assistance.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Eligible applicants include state agencies, cities, counties, and nonprofit organizations that will provide services to people in the 240 counties and parishes in the Delta areas of Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri and Tennessee. Applications must clearly focus on improving life for people of these counties and parishes in the areas of transportation, public or basic infrastructure, economic or business development, and employment and educational training programs.

Contact

Headquarters
Delta Regional Authority
236 Sharkey Avenue, Suite 400
Clarksdale, MS 38614
Phone: (888) GO TO DRA (468-6372)
Voice mail: (662) 624-8600; Fax: (662) 624-8537

Internet

www.dra.gov

Direct Farm Ownership and Operating Loans

Offering government loans to family farmers and ranchers for farm ownership and operating purposes

The purpose of the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) direct farm ownership (FO) and operating loan (OL) programs is to provide financing and assistance to family farmers and ranchers to establish farms and ranches, achieve financial success, and graduate to commercial credit or self-financing.

FSA has various tools to assist family farmers, including low interest rates and individualized credit counseling and supervision. Emphasis is placed on assisting beginning, minority, and other limited-resource family farmers.

Project Examples

- A beginning farmer in Illinois obtained a 4-percent FSA down payment loan for 40 percent of the purchase price of a farm, put up 10 percent of the purchase price, and received a low-interest loan from the Illinois beginning farmers "Aggie Bond" program for the remaining 50 percent.
- A farmer in Kentucky obtained an FSA operating loan to partially shift production out of a traditional yet unprofitable cropping pattern and into an alternative enterprise for which there was a specialized local market.
- A Mississippi farmer used an FSA operating loan 5-year line of credit to purchase inputs required to produce row crops and live-stock, and a 7-year loan to purchase machinery.
- An Idaho farmer received an FSA farm ownership loan to finance the establishment of buffer strips along a creek running through the farm.

Application and Financial Information

Applicants must apply for direct loan assistance at an FSA county office or USDA Service Center. FSA officials will meet with the applicant to assess all aspects of the proposed or

existing farming or ranching operation to determine if the applicant meets the eligibility requirements. Local FSA County Committees will advise FSA loan officials on local agricultural practices, production conditions, and loan applicants.

Once FSA receives all the financial and organizational information, the applicant will be notified as to whether the loan has been approved. The loan recipient must meet certain eligibility requirements, request funds for authorized purposes, be able to repay and to provide enough collateral to secure the loan on at least a dollar-for-dollar basis, and enroll in a borrower training program.

The number of direct and guaranteed operating loans that FSA can make each year may vary, depending on the demand for such loans and the amount of funds appropriated by Congress.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Eligible borrowers must be U.S. citizens, be unable to obtain credit through commercial sources, have sufficient training or experience, have an acceptable credit history, be or plan to become owners or operators of family-sized farms, and be able to demonstrate the need to maximize income from farming. In addition, applicants requesting direct FO assistance must have participated in the business operations of a farm or ranch for at least 3 of the last 10 years.

An applicant who applies for FO assistance must be a beginning farmer or one who has either never received an FO or has received FO assistance not more than 10 years before the date of the proposed loan. An applicant who applies for OL assistance must be a beginning farmer or one who has never received OL assistance or received OL assistance not more than 6 years before the date of the proposed loan.

FO loans may be used for acquiring or enlarging a farm or ranch, making capital improve-

ments, paying closing costs, and paying for soil and water conservation improvements, including sustainable agriculture practices and systems.

OLs may be used to pay the costs of reorganizing a farm or ranch, buy livestock or equipment, buy supplies, finance conservation costs, pay closing costs, comply with requirements under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, pay tuition for borrower training classes, refinance indebtedness under certain conditions, and provide farm and family living expenses.

OLs are generally for 1 year, except for equipment loans, which are generally 7 years. Standard FO loans may be made up to 40 years, except for special beginning—farmer down payment loans, which are 30-year loans that balloon after 10 years, leading to refinancing as commercial loans. Interest rates are at the government's cost of funds for regular loans, one-half cost of money plus 1 percent for certain limited-resource borrowers, and 4 percent for down payment loans. Loans may be made for up to \$200,000.

A portion of available loan funds are reserved for minority farmers and beginning farmers. "Beginning farmer" is defined in part as an applicant who has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years. For beginning farmer ownership loans, borrowers may not already own acreage exceeding 30 percent of the median

acreage for farms in the county. For the beginning farmer down payment loan program, borrowers put up 10 percent of the cost of the purchase, FSA finances 40 percent for 10 years at 4 percent interest, and the rest of the financial package is owner-financed or from commercial sources, including those made through special state beginning farmer programs available in many states.

Contact

FSA is organized on a national, state, and county basis. Applicants apply directly through local FSA county offices or USDA Service Centers. Individuals can locate the nearest FSA office by checking in the telephone white pages under U.S. Government, Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency.

James F. Radintz, Director
National Program Office
Farm Service Agency
Farm Loan Programs Loan Making Division
14th & Independence Avenue, SW, Stop 0522
Washington DC 20250-0522
Phone: (202) 690-1656; Fax: (202) 720-6797

Internet

www.fsa.usda.gov/dafl/directloans.htm

Downpayment Farm Ownership Loan Program

Offering loans for beginning farmers and ranchers and purchase options on inventory farmland

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has a special down payment farm ownership (FO) loan program to help beginning farmers and ranchers to buy a farm or ranch. This program also helps retiring farmers transfer their land to a future generation of farmers and ranchers.

FSA provides direct and guaranteed loans to beginning farmers and ranchers who are unable to obtain financing from commercial credit sources. Each fiscal year, FSA targets a portion of its direct and guaranteed operating loan (OL) funds to beginning farmers and ranchers.

In fiscal year 2003, the obligations incurred for down payment FO loans exceeded \$8.1 million. In addition, FSA advertises acquired farm property within 15 days of acquisition. For the first 75 days after acquisition, eligible beginning farmers and ranchers are given first priority to buy these properties at the appraised market value. If more than one eligible beginning farmer or rancher offers to buy the property, the buyer is chosen randomly.

Application and Financial Information

Apply for direct loan assistance at the FSA county office serving the county where the operation is located or at a USDA Service Center. For guaranteed loans, applicants must apply to a commercial lender who participates in the Guaranteed Loan Program. Local FSA offices have lists of participating lenders.

Maximum amounts of indebtedness are:

- Direct FO or OL: \$200,000
- Guaranteed FO or OL: \$782,000

Beginning farmer or rancher applicants may choose to participate in a joint financing plan that is also available to other applicants. In this program, FSA lends up to 50 percent of the amount financed, and another lender provides 50 percent or more. FSA will charge a reduced interest rate on the loan.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

A beginning farmer or rancher is an individual or entity who (1) has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years; (2) meets the loan eligibility requirements of the program to which

he/she is applying; (3) substantially participates in the operation; and, (4) for FO loan purposes, does not own a farm bigger than 30 percent of the average-size farm in the county.

To qualify:

- An applicant must make a cash down payment of at least 10 percent of the purchase price.
- FSA may provide a maximum amount equal to 40 percent of the purchase price or appraised value, whichever is less. The term of the loan is 10 years at a fixed interest rate of 4 percent.
- The remaining balance may be obtained from a commercial lender or private party. FSA can provide up to a 95 percent guarantee if financing is obtained from a commercial lender. Participating lenders do not have to pay a guarantee fee.
- The purchase price or appraised value, whichever is lower, may not exceed \$250,000.

Note: Applicants for direct FO loans must have participated in the business operations of a farm or ranch for at least 3 of the past 10 years. If the applicant is a business entity, all members must be related by blood or marriage, and all stockholders in a corporation must be eligible beginning farmers or ranchers.

Contact

FSA is organized on a national, state, and county basis. Applicants apply directly through the county or USDA Service Center. Individuals can locate the nearest FSA office by checking in the telephone white pages under U.S. Government, Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency.

James F. Radintz, Director
National Program Office
Farm Service Agency
Farm Loan Programs Loan Making Division
14th & Independence Ave., SW, Stop 0522
Washington, DC 20250-0522
Phone: (202) 720-6797; Fax: (202) 690-1117

Internet

www.fsa.usda.gov

Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)

Sharing with agricultural producers the cost of rehabilitating eligible farmlands damaged by natural disaster and providing emergency water assistance—both for livestock and for existing irrigation systems for orchards and vineyards

Also known as the USDA FSA Disaster Assistance Program, ECP was created to enable farmers to take emergency conservation measures to control wind erosion on farmlands; to rehabilitate farmlands damaged by wind erosion; floods, hurricanes, or other natural disasters; and to carry out emergency water conservation or water enhancing measures during periods of severe drought.

The program offers cost-sharing assistance for carrying out conservation practices. Any person who is owner, landlord, tenant, or sharecropper on a farm or ranch and bears a part of the cost of an approved conservation practice in a disaster area is eligible to apply for cost-share conservation assistance.

Application and Financial Information

ECP cost-share assistance may be available to agricultural producers for all designated natural disasters. The FSA State Executive Director implements the ECP except when severe drought conditions exist. In the case of drought, the Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs may authorize assistance.

Eligibility for ECP assistance is determined by county FSA committees, who base their decisions on individual on-site inspections and take into account the type and extent of the damage. Cost share assistance of up to 64 percent is available.

Requests for cost-sharing of \$20,000 or less per person per disaster are evaluated and approved by county committees. State FSA committees must approve all applications for assistance for more than \$20,000. Applications for amounts greater than \$62,500 must be approved by the Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs.

Technical assistance for ECP may be provided by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

To be eligible for ECP assistance, the applicant must have suffered a natural disaster that created new conservation problems, which, if left untreated, would: impair or endanger the land; materially affect the land's productive capacity; represent unusual damage which, except for wind erosion, is not the type likely to recur frequently in the same area; or be so costly to repair that federal assistance is or will be required to return the land to productive agricultural use.

Note: Conservation problems that existed before the natural disaster are not eligible for cost-sharing assistance.

ECP funds may be used to remove debris; restore fences; grade and shape farmland; restore structures; or establish water conservation measures, including providing water to livestock in periods of severe drought. Other emergency conservation measures may be authorized by county FSA committees with the approval of the State Committee and the Agency's Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs.

Contact

Farmers should contact their local county FSA office after a natural disaster has occurred to determine eligibility for emergency cost-share assistance. Consult the local phone directory or visit the website listed below for locations of county FSA offices.

National Program Office
Conservation and Environmental Programs
Division
Emergency Conservation Program
USDA Farm Service Agency, Stop 0513
Washington, DC 20013
Phone: (202) 720-6221; Fax: (202) 720-4619

Internet

<http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov/ecp.htm>

Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP)

Providing technical and cost-sharing assistance to reduce threats to life and property in the wake of natural disasters; assistance includes establishment of vegetative cover, gully control, stream bank protection, debris removal, and levee stabilization

The Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program helps protect lives and property threatened by natural disasters such as floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, and wildfires. The program is administered by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which provides technical and financial assistance to preserve life and property threatened by excessive erosion and flooding.

EWP funds such work as clearing debris from clogged waterways, restoring vegetation, and stabilizing riverbanks. The measures that are implemented must be environmentally and economically sound and generally benefit more than one property owner.

The Floodplain Easement Option—an option on agricultural land and authorized in the 1996 Farm Bill—gives producers the opportunity to offer their land for a floodplain easement. The easements provide permanent restoration of the natural floodplain hydrology as an alternative to traditional attempts to restore damaged levees, lands, and structures. The easement lands would be ineligible for future Federal disaster assistance.

Project Examples

EWP assistance has been used to:

- Protect rural roads threatened by stream bank erosion
- Reestablish stream channels that altered course because of debris accumulation
- Buy floodplain easements on cropland frequently damaged by floodwaters

Application and Financial Information

The purpose of EWP is to help people recover from natural disasters where there are imminent

threats to life and property as the result of an impairment to the watershed. EWP is not an individual assistance program. All projects undertaken, except for floodplain easements, must be sponsored by a political subdivision of the state, such as a city, county, general improvement district, or conservation district. The sponsor's application should be in the form of a letter signed by an official of the sponsoring organization. The letter should include information on the nature, location, and scope of the problem for which assistance is requested.

Information is available from NRCS offices to explain the eligibility requirements for the EWP program. Send applications for assistance to the local NRCS field office or the NRCS state office. Through the EWP Program, NRCS provides up to 75 percent of the funds needed to restore the natural function of a watershed. The community or local sponsor of the work pays the remaining 25 percent, which can be provided by cash or in-kind services.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Owners, managers, and users of public, private, or tribal lands are eligible for EWP assistance if their watershed area has been damaged by a natural disaster. However, each EWP project, except for floodplain easements, requires a sponsor who applies for the assistance. A sponsor can be any legal subdivision of state or local government, including local officials of city, county, or state governments; Indian tribes; soil conservation districts; the USDA Forest Service; and watershed authorities. Sponsors are needed to obtain necessary permits, contribute funds or in-kind services, and maintain the completed emergency measures.

EWP work must reduce threats to life and property. Furthermore, it must be economically and environmentally defensible and sound from a technical standpoint. The work must represent the least expensive alternative.

EWP funds cannot be used to solve problems that existed before the disaster. EWP cannot improve the level of protection above that existing before the disaster. EWP cannot fund operation and maintenance work, or repair private or public transportation facilities or utilities. EWP work cannot adversely affect downstream water rights, and EWP funds cannot be used to install measures not essential to the reduction of haz-

ards. In addition, EWP funds cannot be used to perform work on measures installed by another federal agency.

Contact

National EWP Program Leader
USDA/NRCS
Room 6019-S
P.O. Box 2890
Washington, DC 20013-2890
Phone: (202) 690-4575

Internet

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/ewp/>

Environmental Justice Small Grants Program

Provides grants for up to \$20,000 to assist community-based organizations that sponsor or execute projects to address local environmental justice issues

The Environmental Justice Program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides financial assistance to grassroots community-based groups to support projects to design, demonstrate, or disseminate practices, methods, or techniques related to environmental justice. Specifically, EPA will grant up to \$20,000 in funding assistance for projects. EPA identifies the following factors as particularly important in evaluating proposals:

- The applicant's ability to manage the grant in compliance with EPA grant regulations
- The degree to which the health and economic well-being of the environment are harmed by environmental hazardous exposure
- The applicant's ability to inform others in the community of the information gathered
- Broad representation of affected groups and individuals in the community
- The applicant group is incorporated. In general, the applicant must show awareness of the time commitment, resources, and dedication needed to successfully manage a grant

Project Examples

- The Penobscot Indian Nation at Old Town, ME, received a \$15,300 grant for "A Strategy for Controlling Toxics into the Penobscot Nation Reservation." The project will develop information for the Penobscot Nation to use while dealing with sources of toxic pollution that are beyond the Nation's territorial jurisdiction.
- A grant of \$17,400 is enabling the "Earth Force Inner City Youths: Creating Sustainable Change Project" of Erie, PA, to help young people learn the effects of air and water pollution and to make a civic-

mindful decision on their effect on the local watershed.

- The Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition will use a grant of \$3,284 to address the environmental effects of correctional facilities in rural Colorado. Accurate information about the impact of correctional facilities on a rural town's infrastructure (such as wastewater, drinking water, light pollution, and economy) will help rural communities make informed decisions about the benefits and/or the burdens of allowing such a facility in their town.

Application and Financial Information

The new Application Guidance will be available each October 1. The application period opens October 1 and ends at midnight December 18. All applications must be post-marked by midnight to be eligible. The solicitation outlining the grant guidelines for each year is published in the Federal Register. Full details about application and financial matters are available on the Environmental Justice Small Grants website at http://www.epa.gov/compliance/environmentaljustice/grants/ej_smgrants.html

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Community-based grassroots organizations, other incorporated nonprofit organizations, and federally recognized Tribal Governments are eligible. Individuals may have their organizations, institutions, government agencies, or associations apply. To receive funds, nonprofit organizations must be incorporated.

Grant funds shall be used to support projects, programs, or activities that promote environmental justice. Projects may include:

- Design, demonstration, or dissemination of environmental justice curricula, including

- development of education tools and materials
- Design and demonstration of field methods, practices, and techniques, including assessment of environmental and ecological conditions and analysis of environmental and public health problems
- Identification, assessment, or improvement of a specific local environmental justice issue or a specific environmental problem
- Provision of environmental justice training or related education for teachers, faculty, or related personnel in a specific geographic area or region.

Priority will be given to community-based/grassroots organizations, tribes, and organizations whose projects will help improve the environmental quality of affected communities by a) developing an environmental justice project, activity, method, or technique that has wide application; b) enhancing the community's skills in addressing environmental justice issues and problems; and c) establishing or expanding environmental and public health information systems for local communities.

Funds cannot be used to acquire real property (including buildings) or construct or substantial-

ly modify any building. Funds also cannot be used for lobbying or underwriting legal actions.

Contact

Contact information for Environmental Justice Program offices are included on the website listed in this entry.

Barry E. Hill, Director
 Office of Environmental Justice
 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
 Mail Code: 2201A
 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
 Washington, DC 20460-0001
 Phone: (202) 564-2515
 Toll Free Number: (800) 962-6215

Headquarters Office:
 Office of Environmental Justice (3103)
 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
 401 M Street SW, Washington, DC 20460
 Phone: (202) 564-2594; Fax: (202) 501-0740

Internet

http://www.epa.gov/compliance/environmentaljustice/grants/ej_smgrants.html

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Providing technical, financial, and educational assistance to farmers and ranchers to address significant natural resource concerns and objectives

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) was reauthorized in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill) to provide a voluntary conservation program for farmers and ranchers that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals. EQIP offers financial and technical help to assist eligible participants install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land.

EQIP offers contracts with a minimum term that ends 1 year after the implementation of the last scheduled practices and a maximum term of 10 years. These contracts provide incentive payments and cost-shares to implement conservation practices.

People engaged in livestock or agricultural production on eligible land may participate in the EQIP program. EQIP activities are carried out according to an environmental quality incentives program plan of operations developed in conjunction with the producer.

The plan identifies the appropriate conservation practice or practices to address the resource concerns. The practices are subject to NRCS technical standards adapted for local conditions. The local conservation district approves the plan.

Application and Financial Information

EQIP may share up to 75 percent of the costs of certain conservation practices. Incentive payments may be provided for up to 3 years to encourage producers to carry out management practices they may not otherwise use without the incentive.

However, limited-resource producers and beginning farmers and ranchers may be eligible for cost-shares for up to 90 percent. Farmers and ranchers may elect to use a certified third-party provider for technical assistance. An individual or entity may not receive, directly or indirectly, cost-share or incentive payments that, in the aggregate, exceed \$450,000 for all EQIP contracts entered during the term of the Farm Bill.

EQIP offers 5- to 10-year contracts that provide incentive payments and cost sharing for conservation practices called for in a site-specific plan. Incentive payments are made to enable a producer to perform a land management practice that would not otherwise be initiated without financial assistance. The payments may reimburse the producer for a percentage of the costs of carrying out the practice, but not for longer than 3 years.

Land management practices are conservation practices that require site-specific techniques and methods to conserve natural resources. Examples include nutrient management, manure management, integrated pest management, irrigation water management, grazing management, and wildlife habitat management.

EQIP also provides cost-share assistance for up to 75 percent of the cost of vegetative and structural conservation practices, such as grassed waterways, filter strips, manure management facilities, and wildlife habitat enhancement.

Contract applications are accepted throughout the year.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Only people who are engaged in agricultural production can apply for this program. Eligible

land includes cropland, rangeland, pasture, forest land, and other farm or ranch lands.

All activities under this program must work toward conservation of natural resources. All approved applicants are responsible for developing and submitting a conservation plan that will address the situation on the applicant's land relevant to the identified conservation needs or objectives that are to be addressed.

A conservation plan is developed by the producer, with the assistance of NRCS or other public or private natural resource professionals, with approval by the local conservation district. The plan is used to establish an EQIP contract.

Contact

For more information about EQIP, visit the website or contact your local or the national NRCS office.

Anthony Esser, Program Manager
National Program Office
Environmental Quality Incentives Program
PO Box 2890
Washington, DC 20013-2890
Phone: (202) 720-1840; Fax: (202) 720-4265
E-mail: anthony.esser@usda.gov

Internet

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/>

EPA's Ag Assistance Center

Providing information to help producers and agribusiness comply with environmental regulations

The National Agriculture Compliance Assistance Center (Ag Center) of the Environmental Protection Agency is the "first stop" for information about environmental requirements affecting the agricultural community. The Ag Center was created by the U.S. EPA with the support of the USDA. Although the USDA and other agencies provide educational and technical information on agricultural production, information on compliance with environmental requirements has not been readily accessible. The Ag Center was created to address this need.

Through its website and other channels, the Ag Center offers comprehensive, easy-to-understand information about compliance — common-sense, flexible approaches that are both environmentally protective and agriculturally sound. The Ag Center also provides information on reducing pollution and making good use of the latest pollution prevention technologies.

This Ag Center home page is the gateway to a large library of compliance information as well as up-to-date news about related EPA programs and proposals. On most topics, the Ag Center offers publications that can be read on line, downloaded, or ordered by fax or mail.

A broad selection of topics are addressed, including pesticides, animal waste management, emergency planning and response, groundwater protection, surface water protection, fuel storage, and hazardous waste management.

Information Available

News and alerts: The Ag Center regularly compiles ag-related news items from EPA headquarters and regional offices, posts them on its website and announces them through its list

server. Particularly important items are more fully described on the website under Highlights. The website also contains separate compilations of ag-related news and alerts, including:

- Items for which EPA is accepting comments
- Health and safety alerts
- Upcoming and recent compliance dates with links to compliance information
- Links to other sources of environmental compliance news

The toll-free number allows callers to order any of the more than 200 publications that the Ag Center has assembled pertaining to compliance with environmental requirements. Call (888) 663-2155 for up-to-date information on environmental requirements that affect agriculture.

To subscribe to the Ag Center List Server, send the command, subscribe agcenter Firstname Lastname (Your first name and last name) in the body of an E-mail message to the list server at listserv@unixmail.rtpnc.epa.gov, with nothing in the subject line.

Contact

EPA's Ag Center
901 North 5th St.
Kansas City, KS 66101
Phone: (888) 663-2155; Fax: (913) 551-7270

Ginah K. Mortensen
Phone: (913) 551-7429
E-mail: mortensen.ginah@epa.gov

Internet

www.epa.gov/agriculture

Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)

Providing cooperation and funding to acquire conservation easements on farm and ranch lands containing prime, unique, or other productive soil or historical and archaeological resources to prohibit conversion of lands to nonagricultural uses

The Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (formerly known as the Farmland Protection Program) provides funds to help purchase rights to keep productive farm and ranch land in agricultural use. Working through existing programs, USDA joins with state, tribal, or local governments or eligible nongovernmental organizations to acquire conservation easements from interested landowners. USDA provides up to 50 percent of the appraised fair market value of the conservation easement.

For the FRPP, a conservation easement is an assigned right prohibiting any development, subdivision, or practice that would damage the agricultural value or productivity of the farmland. It is legally recorded in an agreement between a landowner and a qualified organization and restricts land to agriculture and open space use. Transactions may qualify for a tax deduction.

The FRPP was designed to help protect quality farmland in the face of urban growth. Since 1960, an average of 1 million acres of farmland have been converted to other uses each year, often resulting in permanent loss of valuable topsoil and agricultural land.

Application and Financial Information

When funds are available, an annual notification is published in the Federal Register informing the public that applications will be accepted. If you are considering participation in the FRPP, contact your Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) state conservationist.

The state conservationist may consult with the NRCS State Technical Committee and review the requests for participation by using a ranking

system of USDA priorities to determine the likelihood of conversion considering

- Developmental pressure
- Zoning
- Utility availability and related factors
- The quality of the land considering the soils
- Economic viability
- Size and product sales
- Other factors including its historical, scenic, and environmental qualities.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

To qualify, farm and ranch land must:

- Contain prime, unique, or other productive soil or historical and archaeological resources
- Be part of a pending offer from a state, tribe, or local farmland protection program
- Be privately owned
- Have a conservation plan
- Be large enough to sustain agricultural production
- Be accessible to markets for what the land produces
- Have adequate infrastructure and agricultural support services
- Have surrounding parcels of land that can support long-term agricultural production.

The pending offer must be for the purpose of protecting topsoil by limiting non-agricultural uses of the land.

The NRCS will not enroll land that is owned in fee title by an agency of the United States or land that is already subject to an easement or deed restriction that limits the conversion of the land to non-agricultural use. The NRCS will not

enroll otherwise eligible lands in which it determines that the protection provided by FRPP would not be effective because of on-site or off-site conditions.

To be selected for participation in the FRPP, a pending offer must provide for the acquisition of a permanent easement or 30-year easement, where State law prohibits a permanent easement.

Congress has authorized \$497 million in FRPP funding from 2002 to 2007. Future opportunities for funding will be published as a notice in the Federal Register.

Contact

Denise Coleman, Farm and Ranch Lands
Protection Program Manager
National Program Office
Room 6107S
USDA-NRCS
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20013
Phone: (202) 720-9476; Fax: (202) 720-0745
E-mail: denise.coleman@usda.gov

Internet

www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/frpp/

Farmers' Market Promotion Program (FMPP)

Increasing consumption of fresh farm produce through sales at farmers' markets

The Farmers' Market Promotion Program was created in the 2002 Farm Bill to increase domestic consumption of agricultural commodities by developing, improving, and expanding domestic farmers' markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, and other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities.

Project Examples

This program is administered by the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service. As of this printing, the agency has not developed guidelines to implement the program. Thus, it has not disbursed funds for any projects.

Application and Financial Information

The program's Farm Bill authorization did not specify an annual amount it could receive, but did authorize it to receive "such sums as are necessary to carry out this program" for each of fiscal years 2002 through 2007. The Farm Bill directed the USDA Secretary to establish criteria and guidelines for the submission, evaluation, and funding of proposed projects under this program; however, no such guidelines have been established yet.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Eligible recipients include agriculture cooperatives, local governments, nonprofit corporations, public benefit corporations, economic development corporations, regional farmers market authorities, and other entities as designated by the Secretary.

Although USDA had not written rules to implement the program by the time this directory was published, anticipated uses of FMPP funds include feasibility studies, technical assistance, project coordination, and operating capital. An eligible entity may not use a grant or other assistance provided under the program to buy, build, or rehabilitate a building or structure.

Contact

Allen Hance
Northeast-Midwest Institute
Phone: (202) 544-5200
E-mail: ahance@nemw.org

Internet

<http://www.nemw.org/farmersmarkets/farmers.html>

Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP)

Matching grants for marketing agricultural products through state departments of agriculture

The Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP) provides matching funds, on a competitive basis, to state departments of agriculture and similar state agencies to study or develop innovative approaches for marketing agricultural products. Federal funds totaling \$1.347 million have been provided for this program in the USDA budget in recent years.

FSMIP funds can be requested for a wide range of research and service work aimed at improving the marketing system or identifying new market opportunities for agricultural, horticultural and viticultural products; dairy products; livestock and poultry products; bees; forest products; fish and shellfish; and value-added processed products.

Although all proposals that meet the matching funds requirement and fall within FSMIP guidelines will be considered, states are especially encouraged to develop projects involving partnerships with producer groups, academia, community-based organizations, or other states to address practical marketing problems faced by small- and medium-scale producers.

Project Examples

- A \$35,000 grant to the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, in partnership with Cooperative Development Services, to help producers of organic and natural foods better understand the distribution channels and markets for their products; to conduct market research and provide business development assistance for organic meat, dairy, grain, and feed producers and processors; and to develop strategies to increase opportunities for direct marketing of livestock products in Iowa and the Upper Midwest.

- A \$29,050 grant to the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, in partnership with the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station, to conduct flavor and nutritional analyses and to develop a packaging system designed to enhance competitiveness of U.S. sweet potatoes in the export market by maintaining nutritional quality and maximizing shelf life.
- A \$51,100 grant to the Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture, in partnership with the University of Massachusetts, to foster direct marketing of locally-grown ethnic produce to Asian and Brazilian immigrant communities in eastern Massachusetts.
- A \$76,500 grant to the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, in partnership with the University of Tennessee, to develop a comprehensive guide and self-evaluation tool, based on the experience of more than 50 successful and diverse Tennessee agricultural entrepreneurs, to help start-up, value-added agribusinesses assess and improve their marketing plans.
- A \$77,000 grant to the Wyoming Department of Agriculture, in partnership with Sheridan Community College and the Wyoming Business Council, to analyze the economic feasibility and practical capabilities of a mobile meat processing unit.

For project descriptions from other states, please see the FSMIP website or call the national office.

Application and Financial Information

In recent years, available funds have been allocated to about 25 to 30 projects annually. Lists of the projects by state, and the amounts of

federal funds provided for each project during the past 5 years, can be viewed on the Internet at www.ams.usda.gov/tmd/fsmip.htm.

Funds are allocated on the basis of one round of competition annually. The deadline for submitting applications is usually mid-February, awards generally are announced in July, and funds are available in September.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Only state departments of agriculture and similar state agencies are eligible to apply for direct funding. However, others, including producer associations, economic development groups, academia, and nonprofit organizations, are encouraged to work with their state departments of agriculture to develop FSMIP proposals.

FSMIP will not approve use of grant funds for most advertising and promotion. FSMIP is not designed to support long-term, basic research or,

with limited exceptions, to support capital improvements or equipment purchases. See the website for additional restrictions.

Contact

Organizations interested in developing a proposal should contact their state department of agriculture or the national program office for additional information and guidance.

Janise Zygmunt, FSMIP Staff Officer
National Program Office
Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Room 4009-S
Washington, DC 20250
Phone: (202) 720-2704; Fax: (202) 690-4948
E-mail: janise.zygmunt@usda.gov

Internet

www.ams.usda.gov/tmd/fsmip.htm

Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP)

Providing technical, educational, and cost-share assistance to promote the sustainability of NIPF (Non-Industrial Private Forest) forests

The 2002 Farm Bill authorized the Forest Service to launch a multimillion-dollar forestry program to further assist nonindustrial private forest (NIPF) landowners. The Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP) replaces the Stewardship Incentives Program (SIP) and the Forestry Incentives Program (FIP), while complementing the Forest Stewardship Program by providing cost-share assistance for management plan implementation.

The program is authorized at \$100 million for program years 2002-2007, having allocated \$20 million in its inaugural year (fiscal year 2003) to be distributed through state forestry agencies.

Through FLEP, state forestry agencies can provide a wide array of educational, technical, and financial services that are intended to help ensure that the nation's NIPF and related resources continue to provide sustainable forest products and safeguard the health of our water, air, and wildlife.

As with all Cooperative Forestry Programs, participation in FLEP is voluntary. State Forestry Agencies are currently administering FLEP under an Interim Rule and developing State Priority Plans for FLEP in coordination with their State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committees.

These plans detail how the FLEP funds are used, including minimum acres; maximum acres; aggregate payment; use for technical, educational, and cost-share assistance; and all other factors for the program. These state plans are based on the appropriate mix of educational, technical, and financial assistance desired for each state.

State forestry agencies can use FLEP funds to help NIPF owners achieve a broad array of natural resource objectives. To be eligible for cost-share, landowners need a Forest Stewardship management plan. The practices to be cost-shared and the cost-share rate are described in the State Priority Plan.

Project Examples

Funded projects include those that:

- Establish, manage, maintain, protect, enhance, and restore NIPF lands

- Enhance the productivity of timber, habitat for flora and fauna, soil, water, air quality, wetlands, and riparian buffers of these lands
- Assist owners and managers to more actively manage NIPF lands to enhance and sustain the long-term productivity of timber and non-timber forest resources
- Reduce the risk and help restore, recover, and mitigate the damage to forests caused by fire, insects, invasive species, diseases, and damaging weather

Application and Financial Information

For information about how FLEP will operate in your state, please contact your State Forestry agency. Your State Forester can be found on the National Association of State Foresters website: <http://www.stateforesters.org> and go to the Directory of State Foresters. At this time, the program is unfunded for FY 2004.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

FLEP is available for all NIPF landowners. FLEP allows treatment of up to 1,000 acres per year and variances of up to 5,000 acres if significant public benefits are accrued. The maximum FLEP cost-share payment for any practice may be up to 75 percent. The aggregate payment to any one landowner through 2007 may not exceed \$100,000.

The waiver is granted through the State Forester and approved by the Forest Service Regional Forester. There is no limit to the amount of forest land owned by an individual as long as the person qualifies as an NIPF owner.

Contact

Hal Brockman, National Program Manager
USDA Forest Service, Cooperative Forestry,
Washington, DC
Phone: (202) 205-1694; Fax: (202) 205-1271
e-mail: hbrockman@fs.fed.us

Internet

<http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/programs/loa/flep.shtml>

Forest Legacy Program (FLP)

Serving as a partnership between the USDA Forest Service, participating states, and other partners to identify and protect environmentally important forests from conversion to nonforest uses

Congress created the FLP in 1990 to help landowners, state and local governments, and private land trusts identify and protect environmentally important forest lands threatened by present and future conversion to nonforest uses. Conservation easements, or fee simple purchase, are used to protect sensitive and working forest lands. FLP supports states' forest conservation efforts and helps the states develop and carry out their forest conservation plans.

Designed to encourage the protection of privately owned forestlands, FLP is an entirely voluntary program that operates on a willing buyer/willing seller basis only. To maximize the public benefits it achieves, the program focuses on the acquisition of conservation easements on privately owned forestlands. This allows forestland to remain in private ownership, on the tax roles, but conserved as working forest in perpetuity. Most FLP conservation easements restrict development, require sustainable forestry practices, and protect other values.

Project Examples

- **North Carolina's Forest Legacy**

Program. The most significant threat to sustainability of North Carolina's forests is the conversion of land by development.

The sixth fastest growing state in the United States, North Carolina lost an average of 156,000 acres of productive forestland from 1992 through 1997.

Public-private partnerships are key to implementing the state's FLP. Landowners such as International Paper are joining the state's North Carolina Million Acres Initiative to help protect threatened and endangered species like the red-cockaded woodpecker. International Paper voluntarily

set aside lands that had unique ecological, biological, or cultural significance.

- **Utah's Peaceful Valley Ranch.** Peaceful Valley Ranch is a 7,300-acre working ranch located near Salt Lake City. The project is an example of public-private partnership working to protect open space in Utah. The Trust for Public Land provided expertise and advice to help negotiate the complicated transaction.

The project included many statewide partners, including the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Utah Open Lands, and several private foundations. This \$6.4 million conservation easement included a substantial family donation, and the remaining funds were generated from fundraising and the FLP. The easement allows the landowners to continue grazing cattle and sheep; to lease the property for hunting, fishing, and skiing; and to continue timber harvesting.

- **Maine's Leavitt Plantation Forest.** When the 8,300-acre Leavitt Plantation Forest was slated to be subdivided and developed, the residents of nearby Parsonsfield, ME, looked to the FLP as an important part of their strategy to protect one of the largest remaining blocks of forest in southern Maine. \$600,000 from Forest Legacy combined with funds from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Trust and Land for Maine's Future programs, as well as local and private funding, allowed the state to purchase a conservation easement on this property, protecting this special community forest for future generations.

Application and Financial Information

The Forest Service administers FLP in cooperation with state foresters and other state agen-

cies. Contact your state forester office for more detail and application requirements.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Participation in FLP is limited to private forest landowners. To qualify, landowners are required to prepare a multiple resource management plan. The federal government may fund up to 75 percent of project costs, with at least 25 percent coming from private, state, or local sources. In addition to gains associated with the sale or donation of property rights, many landowners also benefit from reduced taxes associated with limits placed on land use.

Contact

Contact the state agency that manages forestry issues in your state. Your State Forester can be found on the National Association of State Foresters website: <http://www.stateforesters.org> at the Directory of State Foresters.

Rick Cooksey, National Program Manager
USDA Forest Service
Phone: (202) 205-1469
E-mail: rcooksey@fs.fed.us

Internet

www.fs.fed.us/cooperativeforestry/programs/loa/flp.shtml

Forest Products Conservation and Recycling (FPC&R)

Helping communities and businesses find new and expanded business opportunities based on forest resources, wood recycling, and value-added processing

The USDA Forest Service's FPC&R program supports technical specialists in Forest Service Regional Offices, the Wood Education Resource Center, the Wood in Transportation program, and the FPC&R Technology Marketing Unit (TMU) at the Forest Products Laboratory in Madison, WI.

Specialists assist State Foresters, communities, and businesses in encouraging and facilitating the wise, efficient use of forest resources; enhancing economic development; and stimulating better stewardship. Technical and marketing assistance are provided to increase economic opportunities through market and community development; reduce the environmental impact of harvesting and processing forest products; improve the use of wood wastes and residues; extend the useful life of forest products; and improve understanding of forest resource values.

Project Examples

- The TMU at the Forest Products Laboratory helped the Darby (MT) School District switch from fuel oil to a renewable energy heating system. TMU provided the technical expertise that evaluated the economic and engineering feasibility of converting the existing fuel oil heating system to wood chips. The school system will save over \$30,000 in fuel costs each year. The wood chips come from hazard fuel reduction activities.
- The TMU provided financial and technical assistance to the town of Westcliffe, CO, to

build a 32x64-foot park pavilion from small-diameter roundwood removed by forest fuel reduction activities. The pavilion was built to encourage creative uses for small-diameter (3- to 6-inch) roundwood and provide a large public gathering place within the community.

- See the Wood In Transportation Program entry elsewhere in this directory.
- Technical Assistance Providers have helped improve the productivity and effectiveness of several sawmills in various geographical regions. The technical specialists have advanced skills in forest products sawmilling, drying, preservation, biomass energy, value-added forest products, and special forest products.

Application and Financial Information

Financial assistance is not provided by FPC&R. However, FPC&R activities are often associated with state- or community-based projects funded by other Forest Service Economic Action Programs.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Any individual, business, or public entity is eligible to receive technical assistance within the scope of the program. This program provides technical information, advice, and related assistance to forest resource operators, forest resource professionals, public agencies, private forest landowners and managers, vendors, and other individuals to enable them to manage for-

est resources and products more effectively. Activities include processing and marketing of timber and other forest resources; marketing and using wood and wood products; and converting wood to energy for domestic, industrial, municipal, and other uses.

Contact

Contact the regional office of the Forest Service nearest you. The offices are located at: http://www.fs.fed.us/cooperativeforestry/programs/eap/eap_regions.shtml

Or contact the Forest Products Laboratory at:
Susan LeVan-Green, Program Manager
USDA Forest Service
Forest Products Laboratory, Technology
Marketing Unit
One Gifford Pinchot Drive
Madison, WI 53726-2398
Phone: (608) 231-9518
E-mail: slevan@fs.fed.us

Internet

<http://www.fs.fed.us/cooperativeforestry/programs/eap>
<http://www.fpl.fs.fed.us/tmu>

Forest Products Laboratory (FPL)

Providing information on wood housing, forest products technologies, commercial opportunities, and current research and development programs

The USDA Forest Service's Forest Products Laboratory (FPL), established in 1910 in Madison, WI, serves as a centralized wood research laboratory and a clearinghouse for information on the uses of wood. FPL's research and demonstration programs are accomplished through coordinated partnerships involving industry, university, and government.

Innovations developed at the Forest Products Laboratory are patented and licensed for use in private companies for commercial application. The Forest Service Patent Program coordinates its services with the USDA Office of Technology Transfer.

The Technology Marketing Unit of the FPL serves as a focal point for transferring information by matching customer needs with existing research. The general public, industry, regulatory agencies, state and private foresters, educators, and other government agencies and organizations use FPL information to build better wood homes, solve wood use problems, or develop improved wood processing systems.

Project Examples

Examples that relate to value-added wood products and commercial applications of FPL technologies include:

- An examination of new ways that small-diameter and low-valued trees can be used. Material that contributes to the rapid, explosive growth of catastrophic forest fires can be used to build homes, clean up contaminated water, or help control erosion. Engineered wood products, wood fiber water filters, and wood fiber erosion control materials can help improve the health of the forests while meeting our nation's need for homes and clean water. New industries based on such technologies provide opportunities for rural communities to create new enterprises based on a forest resource that has previously had no commercial value.
- An investigation into the potential of converting low-grade hardwood lumber into structural components such as trusses and I-joists. Producers of hardwood lumber could increase profitability if much of the hardwood resource

was converted to high-value products and if they had more lucrative markets for residual materials. This technology holds promise increasing utilization efficiency, providing jobs, and stabilizing rural economies.

- Work with the U.S. Postal Service to ensure that the extremely popular pressure-sensitive adhesive stamps pose no problems to recycling of postal materials. Currently, most pressure-sensitive adhesives in general create major removal problems to mills recycling recovered papers.

Application and Financial Information

Potential users can call or search the FPL website for answers to their technical problems. FPL staff will provide information upon request, help develop the information required, or help identify alternative sources of information or expertise.

No financial assistance is available, although some of the technologies need partners to help demonstrate or evaluate new technologies. Although FPL provides no financial assistance to the private sector for development of cooperative agreements, it can help private-sector partners find appropriate sources of capital either through other USDA agencies or participating state government incentive programs.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Anyone can request technical information. Information on commercial opportunities and technology transfer programs is provided upon request.

Contact

USDA Forest Service
Public Affairs Staff
Forest Products Laboratory
One Gifford Pinchot Drive
Madison, WI 53726-2398
Phone: (608) 231-9200
E-mail:
mailroom_forest_products_laboratory@fs.fed.us

Internet

<http://www.fpl.fs.fed.us/>

Forest Service Economic Recovery Program

Providing technical and financial assistance to build capacity and diversify the economies of rural communities dependent on forest resources

The Forest Service's Economic Recovery Program provides strategic planning, technical and financial assistance, training, and education to rural communities faced with economic problems associated with resource management decisions and policies. Economic Recovery is intended to help communities develop strategic action plans to build community capacity, diversify their economic base, and improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of rural areas.

Specific actions focus on organizing broad-based community teams, strategic planning, and implementing projects contained in local action plans. Funds can also be used for project seed money, feasibility studies, and business plan development.

Economic Recovery is a program component of Rural Community Assistance (RCA), a core Forest Service effort since 1990. RCA, which includes Economic Recovery and Rural Development, is a broad-based effort to help the agency and rural communities integrate natural resource management and rural community assistance.

RCA emphasizes working with diverse partners while developing long-term sustainable solutions to problems and opportunities identified in local, community-based plans.

Specifically, the agency:

- Carries out land management responsibilities that affect local communities
- Has professional expertise needed by communities
- Can provide seed money to catalyze local action and leverage other resources.

Community-level efforts are accomplished with most of the coordination and technical assistance being provided by employees located on national forests. The program works with thousands of partners nationwide and interacts

directly with state foresters and other appropriate agencies.

Project Examples

- Building the capacity of the Watershed Resource and Training Center in Hayfork, CA, to provide assistance not only to local people and businesses, but also to other rural places across the West in community-based forestry using peer-to-peer learning.
- Developing and implementing an ecosystem management plan that includes commercial opportunities for using small-diameter, second-growth pine in Montezuma, Delores, and La Plata counties in southwestern Colorado.
- Strategic planning to maintain the rural character yet enhance social and economic benefits of community change in Wakulla County, FL.

Application and Financial Information

The National Forest Supervisor's offices of the USDA Forest Service can help you prepare applications. Communities are expected to work with their local Forest Service office to prepare a local strategic action plan before requesting other financial assistance. Applicants for grants need to submit form SF-424(A) with a form SF-424.

Funding decisions are based on community and regional priorities. Average grants range from \$5,000 to \$30,000. The federal contribution to the overall implementation of an action plan cannot exceed 80 percent of the total cost of the plan.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Aid is targeted to communities that are located in or near a national forest system and are economically dependent on forest resources or economically distressed by natural resource poli-

cies and decisions. The applicant must be a local government, Tribe or area represented by a non-profit corporation or institution under state or federal law to promote broad-based economic development.

Aid is given to communities having populations of not more than 10,000, or to any county not contained within a metropolitan statistical area. In both cases, the county must derive 15 percent or greater primary and secondary labor and proprietary income from forestry and forest related industries, such as recreation and tourism, range, minerals, and wildlife.

In all cases, the community or county must also be within 100 miles of the boundary of national forest system lands. Individual businesses are not eligible for direct assistance.

Contact

Contact your local regional representative, who can be located from the following website: http://www.fs.fed.us/cooperativeforestry/programs/eap/eap_coord.shtml

Internet

<http://www.fs.fed.us/cooperativeforestry/programs/eap/index.shtml>

Forest Service Rural Development Program

Facilitating and fostering sustainable community development and linking community assistance and natural resource management focusing on healthy communities, appropriately diverse economies, and sustainable ecosystems

The Forest Service's Rural Development program provides technical and financial assistance for locally initiated and planned projects designed to stimulate improvements in the economic or social well-being of rural citizens through forest resources. Assistance is targeted to help strengthen, diversify, and expand local economies experiencing long-term or persistent economic problems.

Rural Development is a program component of Rural Community Assistance (RCA), a core Forest Service effort since 1990. RCA, which includes Rural Development and Economic Recovery, is a broad-based effort aimed at helping the Agency and rural communities to integrate natural resource management and rural community assistance. RCA emphasizes working with diverse partners while developing long-term sustainable solutions to problems and opportunities identified in local, community-based plans. Specifically, the agency carries out land management responsibilities which affect local communities. It has professional expertise needed by rural communities; and can provide seed money to catalyze local action and leverage other resources. Community-level efforts are accomplished with the majority of the coordination and technical assistance being provided by employees located on national forests working with thousands of partners nationwide and having direct interaction by state foresters and other appropriate agencies.

Project Examples

- The program helped Grovetown, TX, evaluate and create commercial uses for the formerly wasted end pieces of southern yel-

low pine boards from local mills. This enabled Chaia marimbas, formerly constructed only in Africa, to be produced as true replicas. The instruments create tones quite similar to the originals.

- The Woodcraft Network of Sedro Woolley, WA, was given assistance in organizing itself and leverage to several other sponsors to hold workshops, provide technical and business assistance to members, host or participate in retail and trade shows, and serve as a network coordinator for small woodworking firms.
- The program helped organize the Menominee Nation Tribal Enterprises (MTE), an award-winning forest-based business that thrives by harvesting what the forest has available at the right time to make products, rather than just what the current market is demanding. MTE uses a strategic planning process that enables people to take control of their lives and write their own plans, and it helps focus business activities on sustaining the forest resource over the long term.

Application and Financial Information

Assistance is available from the National Forest Supervisor's Offices and field offices of the Northeastern Area of the State and Private Forestry branch of the Forest Service, and the State Foresters' staffs.

Funding decisions are based on community and regional priorities and are made in consultation with other state and local agencies and organizations. Average amounts of grants range from \$5,000 to \$40,000.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Communities, state agencies, nonprofits, tribes, educational institutions, and other organizations are eligible to apply for financial assistance. Communities need not be dependent on federal lands or forests to be eligible.

Although criteria for grants vary among states and Forest Service regions, they typically involve community capacity building, forest-based economic development, and forest resource conservation-based technology demonstration or application.

Contact

For contact information, visit the website:
http://www.fs.fed.us/cooperativeforestry/programs/eap/eap_coord.shtml

Internet

<http://www.fs.fed.us/cooperativeforestry/programs/eap/index.shtml>

Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program (U&CF)

In partnership with state foresters and equivalent state officials, providing financial and technical assistance to local governments and others to encourage stewardship of urban and community trees and forest resources

The Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) Program addresses the stewardship needs of natural resources where 80 percent of the nation's population lives, works, and plays. Because in urban areas the quality of life is closely connected with land conversion associated with sprawl, there is a strong economic case for conserving and restoring tree cover and green open space to help guide growth, improve the livability of community neighborhoods, and revitalize city centers and older suburbs. The U&CF Program responds to these needs for more than 70 million acres of America's urban and community forest resources.

Administered through USDA Forest Service regional offices and its State and Private Forestry Northeastern Area, the U&CF Program provides technical and financial assistance to state forestry agencies and other partners to help local units of government and community organizations maintain, restore, and improve the health of urban trees, forests, green spaces, and sustainable urban forest ecosystems.

Healthy urban forests have multiple benefits, including reducing energy use, improving air quality, and reducing storm water runoff and flooding. The program provides support for a variety of purposes, including preserving urban forest cover, planting and maintaining trees, providing education programs, facilitating better use of wood from urban trees, and reducing urban tree waste in landfills.

Project Examples

- Grants were given to Lewis and Clark Bicentennial communities along the Lewis and Clark Trail for tree planting, beautifica-

tion, and other tree-oriented activities that will complement the 3-year celebration.

- Friends of Trees, an award-winning, non-profit tree-planting organization, used U&CF grant funds to develop a volunteer leadership training manual that can also be used by other volunteer organizations.
- The Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council and the Department of Natural Resources helped facilitate the International Society of Arboriculture Research Trust's tenth annual "Tour Des Trees" bicycle ride to raise money for urban tree research and raise awareness of urban forestry.

A record 100 riders from across the country participated in the tour by traveling in parts of Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, and southern Wisconsin. The tour was the culmination of the work of hundreds of volunteers and nearly a year of planning to highlight urban forestry.

- Cost-sharing was provided to the New Jersey state forester to help communities sort urban logs and trees into marketable product lines and sell them to local forest products producers.

Application and Financial Information

Assistance for local governments and community organizations is available primarily through State Forestry organizations. Each state issues its own application procedures. Funds are limited by availability and sometimes by Congressional or Administration-identified priorities. The federal contribution cannot exceed 50 percent of the total project costs.

Some USDA Forest Service regions also provide competitive grants directly to local governments and local or regional organizations for regionally significant projects.

The U&CF program funds a competitive, challenge cost-share program in cooperation with the National Urban & Community Forestry Advisory Council to support urban and community forestry activities that are national or wide-spread in their impact or application. Information about this program is found at <http://www.treelink.org/nucfac/>

Eligibility, Uses & Restrictions

Cities, towns, municipalities, local governments, and nongovernmental organizations are eligible. Priority is given to projects that build local capacity and have the support and involvement of communities and volunteer groups. Ordinarily not more than 20 percent of the total funds can be used to buy trees and plant materials.

Contact

Regional and local contacts can be found at the website: www.fs.fed.us/ucf/Regional_Offices.htm

Forest Stewardship Program

Helping private forest landowners develop plans for the sustainable management of their forests

About 45 percent of all forest land in the United States—354 million acres—is under nonindustrial private ownership, contributing significantly to America's clean water and air, wildlife habitat, recreational resources, and timber supplies. The Forest Stewardship Program provides technical aid, through state forestry agency partners, to nonindustrial private forestland owners to encourage and enable active long-term forest management.

A primary focus of the program is to develop comprehensive, multi-resource management plans to give landowners the information they need to manage their forests for a variety of products and services.

Project Examples

- George and Joan Freeman of Knox, PA, own the 645-acre Freeman Tree Farm, an educational showplace of good forestry practices. Farm visitors can see how the owners met their goals for growing timber and enhancing wildlife habitat at the crop tree demonstration areas. George Freeman says of the Forest Stewardship Program, "It helped me realize how important it is to look at all aspects of the farm and to realize the great progress that can be made with minimal effort."
- Preparing a Forest Stewardship Plan helped to coordinate the efforts of local, state, and federal staff working on weed control in the Picture Canyon area in Arizona. Named for its many petroglyphs, this 55-acre area located along a river had been seriously degraded by yellow star thistle, scotch thistle, and bull thistle. The plan helped those involved to learn to use a much wider array of management activities, including prescribed fire, herbicide application, and mechanical treatment to control the thistles.
- Landowner Charles E. Garrett, Sr., was recognized with the 1999 Certified Forest Steward Award for his outstanding management of Garrett Timbers, a 1,000-acre property in Berrien County, GA. Garrett has used a Forest Stewardship Plan for the past 5 or 6 years. He

has increased the value of the timber on his land by thinning and burning and has provided habitat for declining species such as quail and fox squirrels. Songbird populations have increased by as much as 33 percent since his plan was prepared. Garrett says he likes having a Forest Stewardship Plan because "it is always better to see your land through someone else's eyes."

Application and Financial Information

The USDA Forest Service administers the Forest Stewardship Program in partnership with state forestry agencies. Contact a state forestry agency for more information on this program. For a list of state contacts, see <http://www.stateforesters.org>.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Participation in the Forest Stewardship Program is open to any nonindustrial private forest landowner who is committed to the active management and stewardship of forested properties for at least 10 years.

A landowner may be any private individual, group, association, corporation, Native American Tribe, or other private legal entity. There is no restriction on the maximum number of acres owned, although some states may have a minimum acreage requirement.

Contact

To find out how you can participate in the Forest Stewardship Program offered by your state, contact your State Forestry agency. Your State Forester can be found on the National Association of State Foresters website: <http://www.stateforesters.org>.

Karl Dalla Rosa, National Program Manager
USDA Forest Service
Phone: (202) 205-6206
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Internet

<http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/programs/loa/fsp.shtml>

Fruit and Vegetable Pilot Program (FVPP)

Increasing consumption of fresh and dried fruits and vegetables by U.S. schoolchildren

The Nutrition Title of the 2002 Farm Bill provided \$6 million to the USDA's Fruit and Vegetable Pilot Program (FVPP) during the 2002-03 school year to improve fruit and vegetable consumption among the nation's schoolchildren. The FVPP provided fresh and dried fruits and fresh vegetables free to children in 107 elementary and secondary schools—25 schools each in Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, and Ohio and 7 schools in the Zuni Indian Tribal Organization (ITO) in New Mexico.

In the pilot, each school was allocated \$94 per student. The intent of the pilot was to determine the feasibility of such a program and its success as determined by the students' interest in participating.

Project Examples

According to a report by the USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS), a majority of participating schools considered the pilot program to be very successful and felt strongly that the pilot should continue.

Pilot sites were chosen to represent a mix of large and small, rural, suburban, and urban elementary, middle, and high schools. The participating schools also included students from diverse ethnic backgrounds and family income levels, as assessed by the proportion of students certified as eligible for free and reduced-price lunches.

An ERS evaluation of the pilot program (see website address for this report in this entry) found that:

- Three main delivery methods were used to distribute FVPP foods to students: classroom service, kiosks, and free vending machines. Classroom service alone was used by 41 percent of schools, and 16 percent used kiosks alone. Many schools used mixed approaches, with 36 percent using both classroom delivery and kiosks and 3 percent using classroom service and free vending machines.
- Of the 105 schools reporting on feasibility, 100 said they believe that it is feasible to continue the pilot if funding is made available. Schools believed that 80 percent of students were very interested in the pilot, and 71 percent reported that students' interest had increased during the pilot period. Many schools reported that the 10-percent cap on nonfood (for example, labor) costs out of each grant was too restrictive.
- Of 105 schools reporting, 87 bought FVPP foods from a wholesaler or broker, 55 from retailers (for example, local grocers), 16 from the Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (DOD Fresh), and 13 from other sources, such as farmers' markets, an organic grower, and local orchards and growers.
- Nearly all schools (93 percent) provided some nutrition education and promotion activities, but the extent and type varied widely among schools and grade levels. 65 percent provided nutrition education and promotion as part of school classes, such as by making it a part of health classes or by adapting lesson plans. 34 percent provided nutrition education and promotion in school but outside of regular classes, such as at school assemblies, health fairs, and pilot kickoff events. 63 percent offered informational materials, such as fliers, pamphlets, and "5 A Day materials," and 60 percent provided other materials, such as T-shirts, posters, banners, and buttons or made pueblo address announcements.
- Nearly everyone recognized some health benefit or other value from the pilot. School staff said they believed that the pilot lessened the risk of obesity, increased attention in class, reduced consumption of less

healthy food, reduced number of unhealthy snacks brought from home, increased students' awareness and preference for a variety of fruits and vegetables (particularly less familiar kinds, such as kiwis and fresh pears), helped children who would otherwise be hungry get more food, and increased students' consumption of fruits and vegetables at lunch.

- Some of the reasons that children liked the pilot were that they got to eat favorite fruits and vegetables more often, they liked the health benefits of eating these foods, it was a welcome break from normal classroom activity, and they could eat the foods as a breakfast substitute. Many students described improvement in their eating habits, a greater willingness to try different fruits and vegetables, or, at the very least, a greater consciousness about eating too much of what they call "junk" foods.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Congress is considering whether or not to extend the program to other states. Interested states and schools are being urged to contact ERS for further information.

Contact

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Economic Research Service
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E-mail: JBUZBY@ers.usda.gov

Joanne Guthrie
Economic Research Service
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Linda Kantor
Economic Research Service
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E-mail: LKANTOR@ers.usda.gov

ERS Main Office
Economic Research Service
1800 M Street NW
Washington, DC 20036-5831

Internet

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/efan03006/>

Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)

Helping landowners and operators restore and protect grassland, including rangeland, pastureland, and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as grazing lands

The Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) is a voluntary program that emphasizes support for grazing operations, plant and animal biodiversity, and grassland and land containing shrubs and forbs under the greatest threat of conversion.

GRP is authorized by the Food Security Act of 1985, as amended by the 2002 Farm Bill. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) administer the program in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service.

Participants voluntarily limit future use of the land while retaining the right to conduct common grazing practices; produce hay, mow, or harvest for seed production (subject to certain restrictions during the nesting season of bird species that are in significant decline or those that are protected under Federal or State law); and conduct fire rehabilitation and build fire-breaks and fences.

Project Examples

Because this program's first year of applications was in fall of 2003, examples are unavailable at the time of printing this guide.

Application and Financial Information

Applications may be filed for an easement or rental agreement with the local NRCS or FSA office at any time during each year's designated application period. The program offers several enrollment options:

Permanent easement. This is a conservation easement in perpetuity. Easement payments for this option equal the fair market value, less the grazing value of the land encumbered by the easement. These values will be determined using an appraisal process.

30-year easement. USDA will provide an easement payment equal to 30 percent of the

fair market value of the land, less the grazing value of the land for the period during which the land is encumbered by the easement.

For both easement options, USDA will provide all administrative costs associated with recording the easement, including appraisal fees, survey costs, title insurance, and recording fees. Easement payments may be provided, at the participant's request, in lump sum or annual payments (equal or unequal amounts) for up to 10 years.

Rental agreement. Participants can choose a 10-, 15-, 20-, or 30-year easement. The USDA will provide annual payments in an amount that is not more than 75 percent of the grazing value of the land covered by the agreement for the life of the agreement. Payments will be disbursed on the agreement anniversary date each year.

Restoration agreement. If restoration is determined necessary by NRCS, a restoration agreement will be incorporated within the rental agreement or easement. The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) will provide up to 90 percent of the restoration costs on lands that have never been cultivated, and up to 75 percent of the cost on restored grasslands. Participants will be paid upon certification of the completion of the approved practice(s) by NRCS or an approved third party. Participants may contribute to the application of a cost-share practice through in-kind contributions.

Funding comes from the CCC, which made \$49,942,000 available to implement the GRP in fiscal year 2003. The CCC holds the easement unless the USDA Secretary authorizes a private conservation or land trust organization or state agency to hold or enforce an easement.

Applicants will be selected at the state level by the NRCS State Conservationist and the FSA State Executive Director. Selection criteria for each state will be made available upon request

to the public before signup. Each state's application selection criteria will be available on the NRCS Website at

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/index.html> and <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/grp>

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Either easement option is available for application from landowners who can provide clear title. Landowners and others who have general control of the acreage may apply for a rental agreement.

The Adjusted Gross Income provision of the 2002 Farm Bill affects eligibility for GRP and several other 2002 Farm Bill programs. Individuals or entities that are not eligible to receive program benefits or payments if they have an average adjusted gross income exceeding \$2.5 million for the 3 tax years immediately preceding the year the contract is approved. However, an exemption is provided in cases where 75 percent of the adjusted gross income is derived from farming, ranching, or forestry operations.

Eligible land includes:

- Grassland or land that contains forbs or shrubs (including improved rangeland and pastureland)
- Land that is located in an area that historically has been dominated by grassland, forbs, and shrubs and has potential to provide habitat for animal or plant populations of significant ecological value if the land is retained in its current use or restored to a natural condition

Incidental lands may be included to allow for the efficient administration of an agreement or easement.

Participants in GRP must meet "swampbuster" and conservation compliance provisions. GRP rental agreements and easements prohibit:

- Production of crops (other than hay) that require breaking the soil surface, as well as fruit trees and vineyards
- Any other activity that would disturb the surface of the land, except for appropriate land management activities included in a conservation plan.

Participants are required to follow a conservation plan developed by NRCS (or a designated third party) and the participant to preserve the integrity of the grassland.

There is no national maximum limitation on the amount of land that may be offered for the program, although there is a minimum requirement of 40 contiguous acres, barring special circumstances.

Contact

NRCS

Floyd Wood

Phone: (202) 720-0242

floyd.wood@usda.gov

FSA

Jim Williams

Phone: (202) 720-9562

jim.williams@wdc.usda.gov

Internet

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/GRP/>

Guaranteed Farm Ownership and Operating Loans

Offering federally guaranteed loans for family farmers for farm ownership, farm operation, and the purchase of stock in cooperatives

The purpose of the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) guaranteed farm ownership (FO) and guaranteed operating loan (OL) programs is to help family farmers obtain commercial credit to establish or maintain a family farm or ranch.

FSA guarantees the repayment of the commercial loan at 90 percent of the loss of principal and interest. A 95 percent guarantee is provided in the case of loans to refinance an existing direct FO or OL or for loans made in conjunction with a beginning farmer down payment loan.

Farmers may also use FSA guaranteed loans to buy stock in a member-owned cooperative. The cooperative can be engaged in production, processing, packaging, and/or marketing of agricultural and forest products.

In some instances, a special interest rate assistance program may be used in which FSA provides assistance to the lender to lower the interest rate. The interest assistance is designed in part to assist direct loan borrowers graduate to commercial credit.

Project Examples

- A beginning farmer working with a bank in Iowa obtained a 95-percent loan guarantee for an ownership loan and operating loan made in conjunction with an FSA down payment loan, enabling the bank to make a loan it would not have without the federal participation.
- A rancher in California used an FSA guaranteed loan to buy stock in a newly formed marketing cooperative that processes and sells specially raised beef to Japan.
- A commercial lender in Ohio obtained an FSA guarantee on an operating loan to a farmer who will use integrated pest management (IPM) on a new agricultural enterprise. The guarantee was important to the lender, who was unfamiliar with IPM.

Application and Financial Information

Applicants apply for agricultural loans as they normally would with local commercial lenders that make agricultural loans in their community. The lender analyzes the farm customer's business plan and financial condition.

If the farm loan proposal looks realistic, is financially feasible, and there is sufficient collateral, but it cannot be approved because it does not meet the lending institution's loan underwriting standards, the lender may apply for an FSA loan guarantee.

In some cases, applicants may seek an FSA direct loan first, but a guaranteed loan must always be considered before a direct loan can be provided. Once an applicant provides all the financial and organizational information to the lender, the lender submits a guaranteed loan application to the local FSA office and the request will be approved or disapproved within 30 days.

The number of guaranteed loans that FSA can provide each year varies depending on the demand for loan guarantees and the amount of guarantee authority appropriated by Congress.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

To qualify for an FSA Guarantee, a loan applicant must:

- Be a citizen of the United States (or legal resident alien), which includes Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and certain former Pacific Trust Territories
- Have the legal capacity to incur the obligations of the loan and provide sufficient security
- Have a satisfactory credit history and demonstrate repayment ability
- Have not had a previous Direct or Guaranteed Loan that resulted in a loss to FSA and not be delinquent on any federal debt

- Be unable to obtain sufficient credit elsewhere at reasonable rates and terms to finance needs
- For a guaranteed FO, must be the operator of a family farm after the loan is closed. For an FO, the producer needs to also own the farm

For guaranteed OL loans, authorized purposes include:

- Payment of costs associated with reorganizing a farm to improve its profitability
- Purchase of livestock, equipment, quotas, and bases
- Cooperative stock for credit, production, processing, and marketing purposes
- Payment of annual operating expenses
- Payment of costs for land and water development for conservation or use purposes
- Payment of loan closing costs
- Payment of other farm and home needs
- Refinancing of debt subject to certain restrictions

For guaranteed FO loans, authorized purposes include:

- Acquiring or enlarging a farm
- Making capital improvements

- Promoting soil and water conservation and protection
- Paying of loan closing costs
- Refinancing debt

Contact

FSA is organized on a national, state, and county basis. However, guaranteed applications are accepted and processed only in county offices. Individuals should contact an agricultural lender but may also contact the nearest FSA county office by checking in the telephone white pages under U.S. Government, Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency.

James F. Radintz, Director
 National Program Office
 Farm Service Agency
 Farm Loan Programs Loan Making Division
 14th & Independence Ave., SW, Stop 0522
 Washington DC 20250-0522
 Phone: (202) 720-1656; Fax: (202) 720-6797

Internet

www.fsa.usda.gov/dafl/guaranteed.htm

Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Competitive Grants Program (Section 406)

*Providing a mechanism within USDA for funding activities
on a variety of topics integrating research and extension with education*

Section 406 is a funding vehicle for a wide variety of programs in the Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service (CSREES) that integrate research, extension, and education.

The Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Competitive Grants Program provides funding for integrated, multifunctional agricultural research, extension, and education activities. Funding is announced through a separate Request for Applications (RFA) for each program.

In 1998, Congress authorized the establishment of a competitive grant program to fund integrated, multifunctional agricultural research, extension, and education activities. The Secretary may award grants to colleges and universities (as defined by section 1404 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3103)) for projects that address priorities in U.S. agriculture involving integrated research, education, and extension activities, as determined by the Secretary in consultation with the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board.

Individual programs funded and amounts of funding under the Section 406 funding mechanism may vary from fiscal year to fiscal year, depending on topics of highest priority to congressional appropriators.

Application and Financial Information

CSREES anticipates that about \$50 million will be available for support of this program in fiscal year 2004.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Eligible institutions include colleges and universities as defined by section 1404 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3103). Beyond this, each activity or program noted below—or any likely to be funded in the future through Section 406 funding—has its own call for proposals, application process, and specific eligibility requirements. For more information, contact program coordinators as noted below.

Contact

Mike O'Neill
Water Quality
Phone: (202) 205-5952
E-mail: moneill@csrees.usda.gov
www.csrees.usda.gov/water

Jan Singleton
National Food Safety Initiative
Phone: (202) 401-1954
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www.csrees.usda.gov/foodsafetybiosecurity

Monte Johnson
Pesticide Management Alternatives Program
Phone: (202) 401-1108
E-mail: mpjohnson@csrees.usda.gov
www.csrees.usda.gov/integratedpestmanagement

Dr. Michael Fitzner
Integrated Pest Management
Phone and E-mail: (202) 401-4939,
mfitzner@csrees.usda.gov
www.csrees.usda.gov/integratedpestmanagement

Dr. H. J. "Rick" Meyer
Crops at Risk from FQPA Implementation (CAR)
Phone: (202) 401-4891
E-mail: hmeyer@csrees.usda.gov

Dr. Robert Nowierski
FQPA Risk Avoidance and Mitigation Program for
Major Food Crop Systems (RAMP)
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Dr. Kitty Cardwell
MBT
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Dr. Thomas Bewick
Organic Transitions
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Internet

www.csrees.usda.gov

Intermediary Relending Loan Program (IRP)

Loans to establish revolving loan funds for rural businesses and community development

The Intermediary Relending Loan Program (IRP) provides direct loans at 1 percent interest to intermediaries for establishing revolving loan funds for small businesses and community development projects in rural areas.

Intermediaries are nonprofit organizations or public agencies that relend money through loan pools to ultimate recipients, including businesses, individuals and others such as Indian groups or Cooperative Ultimate.

Final recipients of loans from IRP revolving loan funds involved in agricultural production are not eligible. However, businesses processing, packaging, and marketing agricultural products will be considered.

Project Examples

- As part of the Pacific Northwest Economic Adjustment Initiative, an IRP loan of \$1.5 million supplemented an existing revolving loan fund for relending to small businesses in rural Jackson and Josephine counties in Oregon. Businesses that create or retain permanent jobs involving skills related to manufacturing, industrial production, and wood products are given preference. Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development, Inc., the intermediary, estimates that by targeting a maximum of \$20,000 per full-time equivalent job created or saved, the IRP loan will create or save at least 50 jobs in the fund's first round of loans in these communities.
- The North Kennebec Regional Planning Commission in Maine made a \$150,000 working capital loan to KD Wood Products out of its revolving loan fund, created with a \$2 million IRP loan. KD Wood Products buys lumber from local sawmills and processes it into about 200 different products, including unfinished furniture and lawn and garden items, such as fences, edging, and planters. KD used the loan to expand its operations and create new jobs.
- In Salem, OR, BC Hop Farms, Ltd. received a loan from the local revolving loan fund established with IRP funds. BC Hop Farms provides processing facilities for local farmers who grow hops and contract with breweries for sale of their processed hops. The loan was used for building construction and purchase of equipment to expand existing facilities, providing the capacity to process a larger volume of hops.
- American Cedar, Inc., of Arkadelphia, AR, received loans of \$225,000 from a local revolving loan fund, partially funded by IRP. American Cedar produces dimensioned lumber, finished lumber, finished panels, closet accessories, decorative moth repellents, and custom products for the domestic and international markets. Wood shavings from the manufacturing process are also sold to local horse stables.

Application and Financial Information

Intermediaries with experience and expertise in running revolving loan funds apply to the USDA state offices of Rural Development. Applications are considered in a quarterly national competition.

Loans to intermediaries average \$812,000. Intermediaries receive a 30-year loan with a fixed annual interest rate of 1 percent. The funding available for fiscal year 2002 was \$38 million.

Loans made by intermediaries from the revolving loan fund are limited to \$250,000 per ultimate recipient. Intermediaries develop their own application procedures for ultimate recipients. Factors considered in judging applications from intermediaries include:

- Financial condition
- Assurance of repayment ability
- Equity
- Collateral
- Experience and record of managing a loan
- A programmer providing other assistance to rural businesses

- Ability to leverage with funds from other sources
- The extent assistance would flow to low-income people

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Nonprofit corporations, public agencies, Native American tribes, and cooperatives are eligible to receive IRP funds as intermediaries. Intermediaries must have adequate legal authority and a proven record of successfully assisting rural businesses and industries.

The ultimate recipients of loans from IRP revolving loan funds can be for-profit organizations, individuals, and public and private nonprofit organizations. They must be located in unincorporated areas or cities with populations under 25,000.

Both intermediaries and ultimate recipients must be unable to obtain the loan at reasonable rates and terms through commercial credit or other federal, state, or local programs.

Final recipients of loans from IRP revolving loan funds involved in agricultural production are not eligible. However, businesses processing,

packaging and marketing agricultural products will be considered.

Intermediaries may not use IRP funds to finance more than 75 percent of the cost of an ultimate recipient's project or for a loan of more than \$250,000 to one ultimate recipient.

Contact

For a list of intermediaries and their service areas, more detailed information, or an application, contact your USDA state or district office of Rural Development (formerly the Farmers Home Administration).

Lori Washington
 National Program Office
 Rural Business-Cooperative Service
 Specialty Lenders Division
 1400 Independence Avenue, SW
 Washington, DC 20250-3225
 Phone: (202) 720-9815; Fax: (202) 720-2213
 E-mail: lori.washington@usda.gov

Internet

www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/busp/irp.htm

Introduction to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)

Aiding, counseling, and protecting the interests of small businesses to preserve and promote free competitive enterprise and to maintain and strengthen the overall economy of the United States

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) was created in 1953 as an agency of the federal government. Its mission is to work with banks, intermediaries, and other lending institutions to provide loans and venture capital financing to small businesses unable to secure financing through normal lending channels.

Most businesses meet SBA size standards, but check with your local SBA office for additional details.

The majority of SBA's financial assistance is in the form of loan guarantees. The SBA itself does not provide direct loans or grants to small businesses. The SBA also supports other organizations that provide loans, management training, and services for small businesses. Several of those organizations are featured in this directory.

Contact

SBA offices are located in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam. For the office nearest you, look under "U.S. Government" in your telephone directory, or contact:

Phone: (800) U ASK SBA (800-827-5722)

Fax: (704) 344-6769

E-mail: answerdesk@sba.gov

TDD: 704-344-6640

Your rights to regulatory fairness:

1-888-REG-FAIR

Inquire at your local SBA office for the location of the following resources:

- BICs–Business Information Centers
- TBICs–Tribal Business Information Centers
- SCORE–Service Corps of Retired Executives
- SBDCs–Small Business Development Centers
- USEACs–U.S. Export Assistance Centers
- WBCs -Women's Business Centers

Publications

Call your local SBA office or the SBA Answer desk to obtain:

The Facts About ... SBA Publications — a listing of free SBA publications, or visit the SBA Online library at <http://www.sba.gov/lib/library.html>.

Internet

www.sba.gov

Loans for Socially Disadvantaged Persons

Providing farm purchase and operating loans targeting socially disadvantaged groups

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) can make and guarantee loans to socially disadvantaged applicants to buy and operate family-size farms and ranches. Funds specifically for these loans are reserved each year.

A socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of the group without regard to their individual qualities. For purposes of this program, socially disadvantaged groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asians, and Pacific Islanders.

The purposes of the program are to:

- Target direct and guaranteed loan assistance to socially disadvantaged people
- Identify and remove obstacles that prevent the full participation of those in FSA's farm loan programs
- Advise qualified applicants on developing sound farm management practices, analyzing problems, and planning the best use of available resources essential for success in farming or ranching

In fiscal year 2003, the obligations incurred for Socially Disadvantaged loans exceeded \$87 million and \$67 million for direct and guaranteed operating loans (OL), respectively. Loan obligations exceeded \$33 million and \$185 million for direct and guaranteed farm ownership (FO) loans, respectively.

Application and Financial Information

Direct loans are made to applicants by FSA and include both OL and FO loans.

Guaranteed loans also may be made for ownership or operating purposes. And they may be made by any lending institution subject to federal or state supervision (banks, savings and loans, insurance companies, and units of the Farm Credit System including the Bank for Cooperatives) and guaranteed by FSA. Some

state governments also operate farm loan programs that are eligible for FSA guarantees. Typically, FSA guarantees 90 or 95 percent of a loan against any loss that might be incurred if the loan fails.

Repayment terms for direct OL loans depend on the collateral securing the loan and usually run from 1 to 7 years. Repayment terms for direct FO loans can be as long as 40 years. Guaranteed loan terms are set by the lender.

Interest rates for direct loans are set periodically according to the government's cost of borrowing. Interest rates for guaranteed loans are established by the lender.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Eligible applicants include individuals, partnerships, joint operations, corporations, and cooperatives primarily and directly engaged in farming and ranching on family-size operations. A family-size farm is considered to be one that a family can operate and manage itself.

In addition to being members of a socially disadvantaged group, individual applicants under this program must meet all requirements for FSA's regular farm loan program assistance. To be eligible, an applicant must, among other requirements:

- Have a satisfactory history of meeting credit obligations
- Have sufficient education, training, or at least 1 year's experience in managing or operating a farm or ranch within the past 5 years for a direct (OL) or, for a direct FO loan, have participated in the business operations of a farm for at least 3 of the past 10 years
- Be a citizen of the United States (or a legal resident alien), including Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and certain former Pacific Island Trust Territories

- Be unable to obtain credit elsewhere at reasonable rates and terms to meet actual needs
- Possess the legal capacity to incur the obligations of the loan

In the case of corporations, cooperatives, joint operations, or partnerships, the stockholders, members, or partners holding a majority interest must meet these same eligibility requirements. The borrowing entity must be authorized to operate a farm or ranch in the state where the actual operation is located.

In addition, the entity must be owned by U.S. citizens or legal resident aliens, and the socially disadvantaged members must hold a majority interest in the entity.

FO loan funds may be used to purchase or enlarge a farm or ranch, purchase easements or rights of way needed in the farm's operation, erect or improve buildings such as a dwelling or barn, promote soil and water conservation and development, and pay closing costs.

OL funds may be used to purchase livestock, poultry, farm equipment, fertilizer, and other materials necessary to operate a successful farm. OL funds can also be used for family living expenses, refinancing debts under certain conditions, paying salaries of hired farm laborers,

installing or improving water systems for home use, livestock, or irrigation and other improvements.

FSA is organized on a national, state and county basis. Applicants for direct loans apply directly through the county or USDA Service Center. Individuals can locate the nearest FSA office by checking in the telephone white pages under U.S. Government, Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency.

Guaranteed loan applications are made with the lender. In cases where a lender is not known to an applicant, personnel at the county office will help find one and will help with an application, either for a direct loan or a guaranteed loan.

Contact

James F. Radintz, Director
 National Program Office
 Farm Service Agency
 Farm Loan Programs Loan Making Division
 14th & Independence Ave., SW, Stop 0522
 Washington, DC 20250-0522
 Phone: (202) 720-1656; Fax: (202) 720-6797

Internet

www.fsa.usda.gov

Marketing Services Branch Program (MSB)

Conducting and sponsoring research, training, technical assistance, and demonstration projects on agricultural marketing issues, and providing recommendations for the development of agricultural marketing facilities

The purpose of the Marketing Services Branch (MSB) Program of the USDA is to help U.S. agricultural producers take advantage of existing and emerging marketing opportunities, promote improvements in farm-based income, and facilitate the efficient and economical distribution of U.S. farm products in domestic and international markets.

The program disseminates research information and data and provides technical assistance, training, and facility design recommendations to enable producers, distributors, and marketers of agricultural products and other parties involved in implementing agricultural marketing ventures to develop appropriate and effective business strategies.

MSB uses staff agricultural marketing specialists, economists, engineers, and architects to develop and carry out research and technical assistance projects that seek to resolve current barriers to producer participation in the agricultural marketing system. They also identify alternative channels of distribution that promise to enhance the economic viability of small-to-medium-sized farm and ranch operations.

To facilitate collaborative research and technical assistance on targeted agricultural marketing issues, MSB devotes a limited amount of program funds each year to the development of cooperative agreements with eligible institutions. These cooperative agreements are typically initiated with state, local and tribal government agencies, land-grant universities, or other nonprofit organizations.

Specifically, the MSB program:

- Conducts applied economic research and analysis of marketing problems and issues associated with the domestic and international distribution of agricultural commodities. Particular issues are selected for inten-

sive study based on their potential to provide relevant and applicable marketing strategies/solutions to a broad farm constituency and for their ability to improve the economic competitiveness of small farm/ranch operations by enabling them to take advantage of emerging consumer and demographic trends.

- Analyzes the feasibility of planned renovation/construction projects at wholesale, collection, and farmers market facilities by developing conceptual designs of facilities, estimating cost of renovation/construction, and assessing expected levels of market patronage.
- Prepares research manuscripts, handbooks, videos, and reference materials to document study findings and provide informational resources to research customers. Resources on agricultural market research and development are disseminated through public presentations by MSB staff members at industry, producer, and academic conferences and by maintaining an on-line information clearinghouse.

Project Examples

- The program assisted the Vermont Department of Agriculture and the Center for Rural Studies with structural and architectural designs for the Burlington Farmers Market and with the development of a business plan.
- Technical support was provided to the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries to assess the feasibility of developing packing and shipping facilities throughout the state and of expanding existing facilities in Montgomery, AL.

- A collaborative research project was conducted with Texas A&M University to study meat procurement practices in the commercial food service sector and to identify opportunities for small-scale meat processing firms to become suppliers to restaurants and other commercial food service facilities.
- A collaborative research project was developed in conjunction with Wallowa County, OR, to investigate demand for certified weed-free hay and straw products among specific local and regional market segments (such as public land custodians) to help hay and straw producers capture greater value from the sale of their commodities.

Information Available

A description of program activities, links to publications, and other available resources can be accessed via the Internet at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/tmd/MSB/index.htm> Please contact the national program office to receive print copies of desired publications.

Application and Financial Information

MSB provides funds to research and technical assistance partners through a cooperative agreement by which all money passes from the USDA to a state department of agriculture, local or tribal governments, land-grant educational institution, or nonprofit organization. MSB contributes an average of \$30,000 to each cooperative agreement for collaborative research or technical assistance activities.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Cooperative agreements to carry out collaborative research or technical assistance activities can only be made with state, tribal and local government agencies, land-grant universities or nonprofit organizations. Individuals are not eligible for assistance.

Proposed projects are selected for funding on the basis of their ability to generate information that can be expected to be of widespread educational benefit to the agricultural community and

help small- to medium-sized farm and ranch operations improve their economic competitiveness.

Research and technical assistance information obtained through MSB-funded projects are available to members of the public upon request.

All cooperative research and technical assistance projects funded by the MSB program must address issues related to the handling, distribution, transport, or marketing of U.S.-origin agricultural products.

In cases where cooperative agreements are awarded to state cooperative institutions, program funds may not be expended to cover indirect costs that are common to two or more of a grantee's projects or operations, such as space occupancy, personnel administration, and other overhead activities.

When cooperative agreements are awarded to nonprofit institutions that are not state cooperative institutions, the negotiated indirect cost rate may not exceed 10 percent of the total direct cost of the agreement.

Program funds also cannot be used to pay to construct buildings or buy property, machinery, equipment, or other capital expenditures. With prior budgetary approval from MSB, the cost of renting equipment may be charged against program funds in cases where equipment must be acquired to carry out the planned scope of work.

Contact

Errol Bragg, Associate Deputy Administrator
National Program Office
Marketing Services Branch, Transportation and Marketing Programs
Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA
Room 2642 South Building
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250
Phone: (202) 720-8317; Fax: (202) 690-0031

Internet

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/tmd/MSB/index.htm>
<http://www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing/>
<http://www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets>

MicroLoan Program

Providing short-term loans for financing inventory; buying equipment, machinery, and fixtures; seeking leasehold improvements; providing working capital; or receiving technical assistance

The MicroLoan Program of the Small Business Administration was developed to make more very small loans available to prospective small business borrowers. Under this program, the SBA makes funds available to nonprofit intermediaries, who in turn make loans to eligible borrowers.

Project Examples

Client confidentiality does not permit the SBA or nonprofit lenders to release information to the public on specific projects.

Application and Financial Information

Loans are made by selected nonprofit lenders in amounts up to a maximum of \$35,000. The average loan size is \$12,300. Each nonprofit lending organization has its own loan requirements. Generally, lenders will take collateral against a loan. In most cases, the personal guaranties of the business owners are also required.

Depending on the earnings of the business, the loan maturity may be as long as 6 years. Rates for microloans are determined by the intermediary's cost of funds and the size of the microloan.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Virtually all types of for-profit businesses that meet SBA basic requirements are eligible. Lending decisions under this program are made solely by the intermediary lender. They are based on credit experience, character, and/or relationships built during the preloan technical assistance and training.

Loans may be used for furniture, fixtures, supplies, inventory, machinery, equipment and working capital. Loans may not be used as a down payment or for the purchase of real estate. The MicroLoan Program is a relatively new program. It is available in most areas of the country.

Contact

Check the telephone directory under "U.S. Government" for the nearest SBA office or call the Small Business Answer Desk (800) U-ASK-SBA. For the hearing impaired, the TDD number is (704) 344-6640.

Internet

SBA Home page:

www.sba.gov.

SBA Microloan Program:

<http://www.sba.gov/financing/sbaloan/microloans.html>

Multiple Peril Crop Insurance (MPCI)

Providing comprehensive protection against weather-related causes of loss and certain other unavoidable perils

MPCI is the most common crop insurance policy available through the Federal Crop Insurance Program. The Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC), which is overseen by the Risk Management Agency (RMA), underwrites crop insurance policies for a wide variety of crops in the United States. Crop insurance policies are sold and serviced by private insurance companies.

Coverage is available on over 76 crops in primary production areas throughout the United States at 50 to 75 percent of the actual production history (APH) for the farm. An indemnity price election from 60 to 100 percent of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation expected market price must be selected at the time of purchase.

Minimum Catastrophic Risk Protection (CAT) coverage is available for an administrative fee of only \$60 per crop per county. A waiver of the CAT administrative fee is available for producers who qualify as small and limited-resource farmers. MPCI coverage provides protection against low yields, poor quality, late planting, replanting costs, and prevented planting.

MPCI covers many crops: almonds, apples, beans (canning and processing) canola, citrus, citrus trees, corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, upland cotton, extra long staple cotton, cranberries, dry beans, figs, Florida fruit trees, millet, nursery, peaches, peanuts, pears, peas, peppers, plums, popcorn, potatoes, prunes, raisins, rice, safflower, wheat, barley, oats, rye, flax, stone fruit, sugar beets, sugarcane, sunflower seeds, sweet corn (canning and freezing, and fresh market), tobacco, tomatoes (canning and processing), and tomatoes (fresh market processing) and walnuts.

MPCI benefits include cash-flow protection, good loan collateral, added confidence when developing crop-marketing plans, stability for long-term business plans, and family security. The government shares in the premium costs.

Application and Financial Information

All MPCI insurance policies are available from private insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all county U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency offices.

Local crop insurance agents can describe the different insurance products available with their policy rates and terms. The agent can assist in selecting the best coverage for the crop based on the particular farm operation, risk management and budgetary needs.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

MPCI is a continuous policy and will remain in effect for each crop year after the original application is accepted. Producers may cancel the policy, a crop, a county, or a specific crop in a specific county, after the first effective crop year, by providing written notice to the insurance provider on or before the cancellation date shown in the applicable crop provisions. Producers must request policy changes from their insurance provider on or before the sales closing date for a change of price election or coverage level.

In addition, requests to increase the maximum eligible prevented planting acreage above the limitations contained in the crop policy must be made by the sales closing date for the applicable crop. Contract changes involving a successor-in-interest application and corrections of a producer's name, address, identification number, administrator, etc. may be made at any time.

Each crop year, the producer must submit an acreage report by unit for each insured crop. The acreage report must be signed and submitted by the producer on or before the acreage reporting date contained in the "Special Provisions" for the county for the insured crop. In the event of crop damage, producers should immediately notify their insurance provider of the damage.

Contact

Risk Management Agency
USDA/RMA/Stop 0801
Room 3053-South
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20250
Phone: (202) 690-2803; Fax: (202) 690-2818
E-mail: RMA_mail@wdc.usda.gov

The RMA also has 10 Regional Service Offices, in various locations across the country, that may be contacted for information specific to any area. Call (800) 205-9953 for the address of the nearest office.

Internet

http://www.rma.usda.gov/pubs/rme/fsh_6.html

National Agricultural Library Information Resource Centers (NAL)

Offering information on alternative crops and a wide variety of rural economic development and revitalization topics

Located in Beltsville, MD, NAL is the foremost agricultural library in the world, and is one of four U.S. national libraries along with the Library of Congress, the National Library of Medicine, and the National Library of Education. NAL is part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Agricultural Research Service (ARS). The two public information centers at NAL are:

- Alternative Farming Systems Information Center
- Rural Information Center

Alternative Farming Systems Information Center (AFSIC)

One of several topic-oriented information centers at the National Agricultural Library, AFSIC specializes in locating and accessing information related to alternative cropping systems including sustainable, organic, low-input, biodynamic, and regenerative agriculture. AFSIC also focuses on alternative crops, new uses for traditional crops, and crops grown for industrial production.

AFSIC is supported, in part, by USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program, and a cooperative agreement with the University of Maryland, College Park, MD.

Information Available

AFSIC staff members create publications that focus on specific topics of current interest. Some publications are bibliographic in nature and reflect materials contained in the NAL collection and/or indexed in NAL's database, AGRICOLA. Special Reference Briefs (SRBs) and subject-focused Web pages provide a broader picture of a topic, including descriptive text and organizational resources, as well as suggested reading lists and websites.

Most AFSIC publications are available through the website. To obtain AFSIC publica-

tions on computer diskette (in ASCII), or in hardcopy (limited availability), please make requests by contacting the AFSIC office by phone, mail, or e-mail. Specific topics not covered by AFSIC publications and Web pages may be addressed, on request, by AFSIC reference staff through brief, complimentary database searches.

AFSIC publications include:

- "Great Places to Find Information about Farming Alternatives"
- "List of Alternative Crops and Enterprises for Small Farm Diversification"
- "Educational Training Opportunities in Sustainable Agriculture Directory"
- Sustainable Agriculture in Print Series
- "AFSIC Information Products: Current List/Order Form"
- Links to our alternative agriculture-related publications and bibliographies

Contact

Alternative Farming Systems Information Center
National Agricultural Library, Rm 132
10301 Baltimore Ave.
Beltsville MD 20705-2351
Phone: (301) 504-6559; Fax: (301) 504-6927
TDD/TTY: 301/504-6856
E-mail: afsic@nal.usda.gov

Internet

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic>

Rural Information Center

The Rural Information Center (RIC) provides information and referral services to local, tribal, state, and federal government officials; community organizations; rural electric and telephone cooperatives; libraries; businesses; and citizens working to maintain the vitality of America's rural areas. The RIC Website contains more than

2,500 links to current and reliable information on a wide variety of rural resources and funding sources.

Information Available

RIC staff will:

- Provide customized information products to specific inquiries including assistance in economic revitalization issues; local government planning projects; funding sources; technical assistance programs; research studies; and other related issues.
- Process a broad array of general and funding information requests on topics such as:
 - Successful strategies, models, and case studies of community development projects
 - Small business attraction, retention, and expansion
 - Housing programs and services
 - Tourism promotion and development
 - Recycling programs
 - Community water quality
 - Technology transfer to rural areas

- Refer users to organizations or experts in the field who can provide additional information.
- Perform brief literature searches on computerized databases of requested topics on a complimentary basis or exhaustive searches on a cost recovery basis.
- Identify current USDA research.
- Assist users in accessing NAL's extensive collection.
- Prepare in-depth rural FAQs, publications, and the Rural Calendar for the RIC Website

Contact

USDA, Rural Information Center
National Agricultural Library
10301 Baltimore Ave., Room 304
Beltsville, MD 20705-2351
Phone: (800) 633-7702
E-mail: ric@nal.usda.gov

Internet

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric>

National Fire Plan

Providing a long-term investment to help protect communities, natural resources, and, most importantly, the lives of firefighters and the public

The National Fire Plan of the Forest Service is a long-term commitment based on cooperation and communication among federal agencies, states, local governments, tribes, and interested members of the public. The plan laid the foundation for a long-term program to reduce fire risk and restore healthy fire-adapted ecosystems in the nation's forests and rangelands.

On May 23, 2002, the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior, along with 17 western governors, signed a 10-year Comprehensive Strategy Implementation Plan—A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment. The plan set the performance requirements for delivery of the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy that recognizes the need to invest in long-term solutions to reduce excessive and hazardous fuels. The goals are to collaboratively promote community assistance, reduce hazardous fuels, and maintain and restore fire-adapted ecosystems.

During 2002, the second year of National Fire Plan Implementation, the United States endured the second largest fire season in a half-century. Wildland fires burned 7.2 million acres, or nearly double the 10-year average.

Despite challenging conditions, and with assistance from Congress and the American public, communities were protected, fire risk was reduced, burned lands were stabilized or rehabilitated, and healthy fire-adapted ecosystems were restored. Firefighters were successful in suppressing more than 99 percent of all wildland fires. Of the more than 73,000 fires reported, only 610 escaped to become large fires of over 300 acres.

The introduction of the Healthy Forests Initiative in August 2002 expedited the attainment of National Fire Plan goals. It directs the agencies to improve regulatory processes to

ensure more timely decisions, greater efficiency, and better results in reducing the risks of catastrophic wildland fires by restoring rangeland and forest health.

Firefighting effectiveness has been increased with the addition of aircraft and equipment including engines, helicopters, air tankers, bulldozers, water-foam tenders, and tractor plows.

Project Examples

- Treatment of 2.26 million acres of hazardous fuels on federal land—167,673 more acres than in Fiscal Year 2001.
- Treatment of 458,456 acres through insect and disease suppression projects and treatment of 6,039 acres for invasive plant control.
- Treatment of 1.3 million severely burned acres through rehabilitation.
- Completion of 1,070 projects including bio-energy feasibility studies and community economic development planning.

Application and Financial Information

In Fiscal year 2002, the Forest Service and the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) awarded contracts for more than \$329 million. This total includes \$70 million for hazardous fuels treatment, emergency stabilization, and rehabilitation.

The Forest Service and DOI established a joint action plan to enhance procurement and meet the National Fire Plan contracting goals. The five fire management agencies reviewed their contracting and assistance procedures. The report of this study identifies obstacles and recommends steps to overcome them.

Under P.L. 93-638, the Bureau of Indian Affairs awards funds to tribes for hazardous fuel treatments and rehabilitation.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Based on the joint study by the five federal wildland fire management agencies, a review team identified areas of improvement to remove barriers, improve accountability, and better use contracting services. Specific targets for contracting are evolving through work on a 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy Implementation Plan.

For more details, contact your Regional Forest Service office. The listing for Regional Offices can be found at www.fs.fed.us/contactus/regions.shtml; or contact your state forester's office, which can be

found on the National Association of State Foresters website at <http://www.stateforesters.org> and go to the Directory of State Foresters.

Contact

Corbin Newman, National Fire Plan Coordinator
Forest Service, Washington, DC

Phone: (202) 205-1332

E-mail: cnewman02@fs.fed.us

Internet

<http://www.fireplan.gov/>

National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program—Agricultural Management Assistance

*Providing financial assistance to producers in 15 states
to transition into organic farming*

The Organic Certification Cost-Share Program is part of the Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) Program. Under this program, cost-share assistance is provided to producers in 15 states that have a historically low participation rate in the Federal Crop Insurance Program—Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

The program provides cost-share assistance to organic crop and livestock producers who have been certified by a USDA accredited certifying agent. USDA has determined that payments will be limited to 75 percent of an individual producer's certification costs up to a maximum of \$500.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

To receive reimbursement for the 2004-2005 AMA cost share program, a crop and/or livestock producer must receive certification or update of certification by a USDA accredited certifying agent from October 1, 2004, through September 30, 2005.

Contact

For application information, contact the state agencies listed below.

Richard Macsuga
Connecticut Department of Agriculture
765 Asylum Avenue
Hartford, CT 06105
Phone: (860) 713-2508

Terry Van Horn
Delaware Department of Agriculture
2320 South Dupont Highway
Dover, DE 19901
Phone: (302) 698-4585

Terry Bourgoïn
Maine Department of Agriculture
28 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333
Phone: (207) 287-7506

Deanna Baldwin
Maryland Department of Agriculture
50 Harry S. Truman Parkway
Annapolis, MD 21401
Phone: (410) 841-5775

Mary Jordan
Massachusetts Department of Agriculture
251 Causeway St., Ste 500
Boston, MA 02114-2151
Phone: (617) 626-1750

Peggy McKie
Nevada Department of Agriculture
350 Capitol Hill
Reno, NV 89502
Phone: (775) 688-1182 ext. 244

Vickie Smith
New Hampshire Department of Agriculture,
Markets, and Food
P.O. Box 2042
Concord, NH 03302-2042
Phone: (603) 271-3685

Anne Ference
New Jersey Department of Agriculture
P.O. Box 330
Trenton, NJ 08625
Phone: (609) 292-5575

Jon Thompson
New York Department of Agriculture and Markets
1 Winners Circle
Albany, NY 12235
Phone: (518) 457-7076

Martha Melton
Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
2301 North Cameron Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408
Phone: (717) 772-8354

Dan Lawton
Rhode Island Department of the Environment
Division of Agriculture and Resource Marketing
235 Promenade St., Room 370
Providence, RI 02908-5734
Phone: (401) 222-2781 ext. 4516

Seth Winterton
Utah Department of Agriculture
350 North Redwood Road
P.O. Box 146500
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-6500
Phone: (801) 538-7141

Louise Calderwood
Vermont Department of Agriculture
116 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05602
Phone: (802) 828-3833

Tom Clark
West Virginia Department of Agriculture
1900 Kanawha Blvd. East
Charleston, WV 25305
Phone: (304) 558-2210

Renee King
Wyoming Department of Agriculture
2219 Carey Avenue
Cheyenne, WY 82001-6593
Phone: (307) 777-6587

Bob Pooler, Marketing Specialist, National
Organic Program
National Organic Program Office
USDA/AMS/TMP/NOP
Room 4008-South, Ag Stop 0268
Washington, DC 20250
Phone: (202) 720-7808; Fax: (202) 205-7808
E-mail: Bob.Pooler@usda.gov.

Internet

[http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/StatePrograms/
Statehome.html](http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/StatePrograms/Statehome.html)

National Organic Program (NOP)

*Providing national organic certification standards, information,
and accreditation for certifying agencies*

The National Organic Program was established under the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 to help develop credible national organic standards, ensure consumer confidence, and facilitate trade. The NOP is charged with developing this with the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), an advisory committee of farmers, consumer advocates, scientists, and others.

Organic production has been practiced in the United States since the late 1940s. From the beginning, the industry has grown from experimental garden plots to farms with surplus products to sell under a special "organic" label. Food manufacturers have developed organic processed products and many retail chains specialize in the sale of "organic" products.

This growth stimulated a need for verification that products are indeed produced according to certain standards. Thus, the organic certification industry also evolved. By the late 1980s, after trying to develop a consensus of production and certification standards, the organic industry petitioned Congress to draft the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA) defining "organic" practices.

Congress passed the act to:

- Establish national standards governing the marketing of certain agricultural products as organically produced products
- Assure consumers that organically produced products meet a consistent standard
- Facilitate commerce in fresh and processed food that is organically produced.

The OFPA also provided that an advisory board, the National Organic Standards Board, be assembled to help the USDA write the regulation. The board is composed of 15 members, each representing different segments of the organic industry. They make recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture, especially regarding the substances that can be used in organic production and handling.

As a result of the OFPA, USDA dedicated much time and effort to fulfill the requirements of the statute. By adopting the NOSB recommendations, listening to public input, consulting with states

and certifying agents, and considering other Federal regulations, the NOP developed and implemented national standards for organic production and handling. The regulations became effective on October 21, 2002.

Information Available

Interested parties can obtain a wealth of information about U.S. organic regulations and practices from the National Organic Program. This includes information about:

- **Certifying agents:** Includes accredited certifying agents, accreditation status table, application for accreditation, appeals process, compliance and enforcement, and cost share.
- **Consumer issues:** Includes background information about NOP, the USDA organic seal, organic labeling photo, fact sheets such as Organic Standards, Labeling and Certification.
- **NOP regulations and policies:** Includes NOP standards, National List information, policy statements, and trade issues.
- **Producers, handlers, and processors:** Includes National List information, labeling packaged products, labeling alcoholic beverages, the peer review panel, and questions and answers.
- **State programs:** Includes approval procedures, approved state programs, accredited state Departments of Agriculture, state contacts, and the cost-share program.

Contact

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National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program (NRI)

*Providing grants for research and development
for sustainable production systems, new uses and added value
for agricultural products, and revitalized rural economies*

The purpose of the NRI program is to support research, extension, and education grants that address key problems of national, regional, and multi-state importance in sustaining all components of agriculture (farming, ranching, forestry – including urban and agroforestry – aquaculture, rural communities, human nutrition, processing, etc).

Providing this support requires that NRI advance fundamental sciences in support of agriculture and food systems and coordinate opportunities to build on these discoveries. Building on these discoveries will necessitate new efforts in education and extension that deliver science-based knowledge to people, allowing them to make informed practical decisions. Hence, the NRI will now accept applications for fundamental research, mission-linked research, and integrated research, extension, and education projects.

However, applicants should know that the NRI will use no more than 20 percent of available funds to support integrated projects and that these funds will not be distributed uniformly, but targeted to specific priorities. Targeted priorities for integrated projects are clearly identified within the detailed descriptions of program offerings.

There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards. Contingent on congressional action, in FY 2005 CSREES anticipates that about \$150 million will be available for support of this program. Of this amount, no more than 20 percent will be made available to fund integrated projects, with the balance used to fund research projects.

Project Examples

- A grant for \$530,000 for 4 years was awarded to the University of Florida to study sustainable management of cattle grazing in south central Florida, where extensive subtropical rangelands intersect with some of the most sensitive natural systems in the United States. How ranching affects native ecosystems, wildlife habitat, and surface water quality are issues of increasing importance to environmentalists, ranchers, and policy makers. A shared goal among all interested parties is to improve the environmental and economic sustainability of beef cattle ranches.
- A 3-year grant to Washington State University for \$202,000 will be used to examine the interconnections between small farm operations and other local actors, including farm workers, residential neighbors, consumers, large farms, farm suppliers, processors, distributors, and retailers. In particular, it will determine how local agri-food systems are embedded within distinctive rural communities and natural environments, including those facing rapid transformation and development pressures. A goal of this project is to ascertain the obstacles and opportunities encountered by small-scale producers within local food systems.
- A grant for \$125,000 for 3 years was awarded to the University of North Texas to develop novel cottonseed fatty acid composition in seed oils of cotton plants as value-added resources for the cotton industry. Although fiber will always be the primary

seed-derived product from cotton, increased value in secondary, processed seed products will increase the overall value of the cotton crop and could stimulate a greatly improved utilization of this renewable domestic agricultural resource.

Application and Financial Information

NRI solicits proposals that are single or multi-disciplinary, fundamental research, mission-linked research, or integrated research, extension, and education. The following definitions apply:

- **Fundamental research:** Research that tests scientific hypotheses and provides basic knowledge that allows advances in applied research and from which major conceptual breakthroughs are expected to occur.
- **Mission-linked research:** Research on specifically identified agricultural problems that, through a continuum of efforts, provides information and technology that may be transferred to users and may relate to a product, practice, or process.
- **Multidisciplinary research:** Multi-disciplinary projects are those (research or integrated) in which investigators from two or more disciplines are collaborating closely. These collaborations, where appropriate, may integrate the biological, physical, chemical or social sciences.
- **Integrated projects:** "Integrated" means to bring together the three components of the agricultural knowledge system (research, extension, and education) around a problem or activity. In FY 2005, the NRI is seeking to support projects that bring together at least two of these components and address identified agricultural problems as described in this RFA.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

For research projects, the eligibility requirements for the NRI are as follows: except where otherwise prohibited by law, state agricultural experiment stations, all colleges and universities, other research institutions and organizations, federal agencies, national laboratories, private

organizations or corporations, and individuals are eligible to apply for and to receive a competitive grant.

For integrated projects, the eligibility requirements for the NRI are as follows: except where otherwise prohibited by law, state agricultural experiment stations, all colleges and universities, research foundations maintained by colleges or universities, private research organizations with established and demonstrated capacities to perform research or technology transfer, federal research agencies, and national laboratories are eligible to apply for and receive a competitive grant.

Project Evaluation

Each application will be evaluated in a two-part process. First, each application will be screened to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements set forth in the Request for Applications (RFA). Applications that do not fall within the guidelines as stated in the RFA will be eliminated from program competition and will be returned to the applicant. Second, a peer review panel will technically evaluate applications that meet these requirements and provide written comments all applicants. Written comments will also be solicited from ad hoc reviewers when required. When carrying out its review, the peer review panel will take into account the following factors:

- Scientific merit of the application for research, extension and/or education;
- Qualifications of the proposed project personnel and adequacy of facilities;
- Planning and administration of the proposed project; and
- Relevance of the proposal to improvements in and sustainability of U.S. agriculture.

Contact

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Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program Grants

Controlling nonpoint sources of water pollution

Congress enacted Section 319 of the Clean Water Act in 1987 as a way of encouraging and supporting the states' efforts to develop management programs to control the complex problem of nonpoint source water pollution.

Nonpoint source pollution is caused by rainfall or snowmelt moving over and through the ground and carrying natural and human-made pollutants into lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, estuaries, other coastal waters, and groundwater. Atmospheric deposition and hydrologic modification are also sources of nonpoint pollution.

During the past 4 years of federal appropriations, Congress has increased its appropriations from \$105 million in fiscal year 1998 to \$238.4 million in fiscal year 2003 to help states focus more resources on the restoration of impaired waters as well as to generally implement more robust programs.

Despite all these program improvements, the EPA, states, and all our partners have continued to face daunting challenges in our efforts to implement nonpoint source programs that will protect both our good-quality and threatened waters and restore those that are impaired.

Project Examples

- The Buffalo River watershed in north central Arkansas covers 860,000 acres. From the headwaters in the Boston Mountains, the Buffalo River flows unobstructed for 150 miles eastward to the confluence with the White River. Because of the unique scenic and scientific features associated with the free-flowing river, Congress established the Buffalo National River Watershed in 1972 to preserve this national treasure for future generations.

Both citizens and resource agencies expressed concern over the construction and operation of a confined swine facility so close to the river. The Buffalo River Swine Waste Demonstration Project was

initiated in 1995 with the primary goal of protecting the high-quality water in the Buffalo National River watershed by working with the local farmers and government agencies to identify and address the problems associated with the LAWMS.

This 5-year project is evaluating existing swine liquid waste management practices and demonstrated the benefits of new or improved best management practices (BMPs) in protecting water quality.

- The Grassland Bypass Project is an innovative program designed to improve water quality in the channels used to deliver water to wetland areas. Agricultural runoff is one of the primary sources of discharge to rivers and streams that do not meet water quality standards, affecting 70 percent of these million acres of land devoted to irrigated agriculture and where agricultural drainage and runoff provide a significant proportion of river flows during dry seasons.

The Grassland Drainage Area is an agricultural region on the west side of California's San Joaquin Valley. The agricultural land there is productive, but the soil contains a high level of selenium, a naturally occurring trace element.

In 1996, several irrigation and drainage districts formed the "Grassland Area Farmers," a regional drainage entity that includes some 97,000 acres of irrigated farmland. To meet the selenium load limits, the Grassland Area Farmers have implemented a wide variety of practices, including formation of a regional drainage entity, newsletters and other communications with the farmers, a monitoring program, an active land management program to use subsurface drainage on salt-tolerant crops, installation of improved irrigation systems, installation and use of drainage recycling systems

to mix subsurface drainage water with irrigation supplies under strict limits, and tiered water pricing.

Application and Financial Information

Effective in October 2003, the EPA has developed guidelines for states' implementation of nonpoint source management programs under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act and for the award of Section 319 grants to states to implement those programs.

These guidelines apply to grants appropriated by Congress in Fiscal year 2004 and in subsequent years. The guidelines continue EPA's policy of focusing a significant portion of Section 319 funds (\$100 million annually) to address watersheds where nonpoint source pollution has resulted in impairment of water quality. The remaining funds are to be used by states to help them implement their broad array of programs and authorities to address all of the water quality threats and impairments caused by nonpoint source pollution.

For grants awarded in fiscal year 2004 and subsequent years, these guidelines supersede and replace all of the following guidance documents: Nonpoint Source Program and Grants Guidance for Fiscal Year 1997 and Future Years (May 1996). The complete text of today's guidelines is also available at EPA's Nonpoint Source Website: <http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/cwact.html>.

For a detailed description of the program and grant guidelines, visit the Website at <http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/EPA-WATER/2003/October/Day-23/w26755.htm>.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Section 319 grant funds are to be directed toward the states' and the EPA's common vision

that all states implement dynamic and effective programs designed to achieve and maintain beneficial uses of water. Approved state nonpoint source management programs provide the framework for determining what activities are eligible for funding under Section 319(h).

Although these guidelines emphasize using Section 319 funds to develop and implement watershed-based plans to restore priority waters, states may also use Section 319 base funds for other activities that will generally support these goals, as well as water quality protection goals, including nonregulatory or regulatory programs.

Indian Tribes that have approved nonpoint source assessments and management programs and also have "treatment-as-a-state" status may also administer nonpoint source management programs and grants under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act. Because of differing statutory provisions that apply to Tribes, the EPA publishes separate guidance for Tribal nonpoint source programs and grants.

Contact

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Office of Technology Transfer (OTT), Patent and Licensing Program

Negotiating with the private sector on licensing USDA-patented technologies

The Office of Technology Transfer (OTT) negotiates with the private sector to license USDA-patented technologies, pursuant to the policy and objectives set forth in the 1980 amendments to the Patent and Trademark Laws (Bayh-Dole) Act and the Federal Technology Transfer Act of 1986. Companies interested in licensing USDA technology can obtain a license application on line or from an OTT licensing staff member.

License fees and royalties are negotiated on a case-by-case basis and depend on several factors, including the scope of the rights granted, the size of the potential market, and the time and financial investment required by the licensee to bring a product to market. Fair fees and royalties for each invention are determined from information provided by the license applicant concerning the product concept, market size, profitability, and additional research and development required before product introduction.

Project Examples

- Agritech, Inc. received a license for an electronic fenceless monitoring system for controlling the grazing range of cattle. The system uses radio transmitters and a collar receiver to circumscribe with an electric stimulus the area where cattle are allowed to graze. It is intended to reduce fencing and handling costs, improve the rangeland distribution of livestock, and preserve lakes and streams on public rangeland.
- The Beamflicker™ greenhouse illumination device was licensed to Hydrofarm, Inc. The Beamflicker™ consists of a sodium arc lamp and an oscillating parabolic mirror that function to provide uniform and intermittent light to all areas of a greenhouse. This unique system shortens the amount of growth inhibiting "dark time" that a plant endures and provides optimal exposure to

required red light to aid in plant growth. The Beamflicker™ is a reliable, cost effective, and efficient system to ensure optimal growth of seedlings in a greenhouse environment.

- Campbell Scientific, Inc. is marketing a licensed Duff Moisture Meter (DMM600™) to quickly and accurately measure the moisture content of forest duff (organic litter on the forest floor). Ascertaining the moisture content of duff is important for land managers to determine optimal duff moisture conditions for prescribed burns and for wildfire managers to aid in predicting the behavior characteristics of a wildfire. The moisture meter may also be used with other organic materials where moisture content is important, such as hay and cotton.

Application and Financial Information

Industries seeking a license to a USDA patent can obtain a license application from the Office of Technology Transfer,
<http://www.ars.usda.gov/business/docs.htm?docid=768>

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Licenses can be granted both exclusively and nonexclusively or by specific field of use. Negotiated royalty rates are based upon the anticipated profit margins for the products to be marketed by the licensee.

Contact

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Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative

Establishing a new program to help determine desirable traits for organic commodities, to identify marketing and policy constraints on the expansion of organic agriculture, and to conduct advanced research on organic farms

Under the 2002 Farm Bill, the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative authorizes a total of \$15 million, or \$3 million per year, in mandatory appropriations in fiscal years 2004-08. Funds will be used to administer competitive research grants through USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service. The research is to meet the production, marketing, and policy needs of the growing organic industry.

Application and Financial Information

At the time of printing for this directory, CSREES was preparing to issue a request for applications for funding that will contain financial details of the program.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Individuals, nonprofit organizations and government agencies are eligible to apply for funding under this program. Individuals are strongly encouraged to apply for program funding through land grant universities, nonprofit organizations, and extension offices.

Under the program, research must be conducted in one or more of six main areas:

- Facilitating the development of organic agriculture production, breeding, and processing methods

- Evaluating the potential economic benefits to producers and processors who use organic methods
- Exploring international trade opportunities for organically grown and processed organic commodities
- Determining desirable traits for organic commodities
- Identifying marketing and policy constraints on the expansion of organic agriculture
- Conducting advanced on-farm research and development that emphasizes observation of, experimentation with, and innovation for working organic farms, including research relating to production and marketing and to socioeconomic conditions

Contact

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Internet

<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/organicagriculture>
<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/funding.cfm>

Organic Transitions Program

Assisting farmers in successfully adopting organic practices and supporting systems research on organic farming combined with outreach and education programs to help farmers apply the results of that research

The Organic Transition Program is an integrated research, education, and extension grants program that helps farmers surmount challenges of organic production and marketing. As the organic industry continues to grow at 20 percent per year, extension and other information providers report more farmers seeking reliable information on making the transition to organic production.

A part of the USDA Integrated Research, Education and Extension Competitive Grants Program, the Organic Transitions Program aims to:

- Develop approaches, tactics and systems that will support certified organic production guidelines
- Develop and conduct outreach and education programs for organic producers

Project Examples

- Many organic and transitional organic farmers struggle with production limitations owing to various inadequate or inefficient management factors, including pest and organic fertility management. Ohio State University was awarded \$493,343 to provide information that will help organic and transitional organic farmers with strategies to optimize management of organic matter, soil fertility, pests, and crop health.
- Pesticides used for lowbush blueberry cultivation may harm the environment next to and within lowbush blueberry fields. A grant of \$175,128 was given to the University of Maine to develop and implement comprehensive season-long pest management programs to address key blueberry pest complexes. An organic pest management system for lowbush blueberries may reduce the risk

of pesticides to the environment.

- Weed management in reduced pesticide and organic cropping systems is a priority for many growers nationally and is consistently listed near the top of organic and reduced-input growers' pest management concerns. A \$498,335 grant was awarded to the Pennsylvania State University, to study the reduction of the weed seedbank as a key component in successful transition to organic production. The effects of various weed suppression tactics will be measured on other pests, soil quality indicators, and economic indicators.

Application and Financial Information

Organic Transitions is run as a competitive grants program. Applications are reviewed by experts from universities and the private sector as well as by farmers. Applications are placed into funding categories ranging from "Excellent" to "Do Not Fund" and are then ranked within each group. CSREES starts with the best proposal and funds proposals until the funds are exhausted.

Organic Transitions projects should plan to deliver applied production information to producers. Fieldwork for this program area must be done on certified organic land or on land in transition to organic certification, as appropriate to project goals and objectives.

Section 406 programs, under which the Organic Transitions Program is funded, differ from some other programs that CSREES operates in that proposals should be integrated across functions: that is, projects should contain research and/or education and/or extension. The ideal project is one that contains all three elements.

The Request for Applications (RFA) for the program is at the link listed in this entry under the Integrated Pest Management:

http://www.ree.usda.gov/1700/funding/rfaintegrated_03.htm or under Funding Opportunities: <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/fundview.cfm?fundum=1142>

The maximum award is up to 4 years, with no funding limit set.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Only employees of degree-granting institutions are eligible to apply for Organic Transitions Program funding as "project directors."

However, others may receive funds from project directors as subcontractors to perform certain parts of the program.

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<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/organicagriculture>

<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/funding.cfm>

Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers

Providing grants to educational institutions and nonprofit organizations that provide outreach, training, and technical assistance to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers

This program is designed to reverse the decline of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers by encouraging and supporting them in their efforts to own and operate farms, participate in agricultural programs, and become an integral part of the agricultural community.

Project Examples

- Assistance was provided to farmers in marketing strategies and improvements, including the processing and marketing of food products through a food park developed in conjunction with a local chamber of commerce. The project also includes assistance to farmer participants to provide access to new markets and adding value (such as packing capabilities) to joint marketing efforts. The overall goal of the project is to increase net yields for participating small and disadvantaged farmers.
- Farm planning and marketing assistance is provided to increase the variety (including reintroducing native plants) of vegetables. Participation in the project also enables farmers to pursue continuing education toward a degree in agricultural fields. The overall goal is to increase farmer yields by better meeting food security and nutrition needs of local customers.
- Training workshops and meetings (68 total) were held on farm management, record-keeping, and marketing topics. As a result of these and other project activities, 121 farmers were assisted in developing farm and home plans; 88 farmers began using record-keeping systems; 49 farmers secured loans from commercial banks and 29 secured loans from Farm Service Agency (FSA); 21 farmers completed conservation plans; and six farmers graduated from FSA

credit to commercial sources. The project also developed a demonstration on how to grow greens and an 8-week residential program for youth on beginning agriculture.

Application and Financial Information

Requests for proposals appear in the Federal Register. Eligible educational institutions and community-based organizations should submit a written proposal to the address given in the Federal Register. Notice of action taken on proposals will generally be given within 90 days of the proposal submission deadline.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Eligible institutions include community-based institutions; land-grant colleges, including Tuskegee University, Indian tribal community colleges and Alaska Native cooperative colleges; and Hispanic-serving post-secondary educational institutions that:

- Have demonstrated experience in providing agricultural education or other agriculturally related services to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers
- Provide documentary evidence of past experience in working with socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers during the 2 years preceding the application for assistance
- Do not engage in activities prohibited under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986

Applicants must have the financial, legal, administrative, and operational capacity to carry out the objectives of the program. Applicants should provide a certification of all members of the applicant/applicant entity including name, gender, race, and national origin.

Educational and community-based organizations receive grants to provide outreach and technical assistance to encourage and assist socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers to own and operate farms and ranches and to participate in USDA programs and services.

Assistance includes information on:

- Farm management — operating a farm or ranch to produce income adequate to service debt, maintain farm or ranch operations, and provide a reasonable standard of living
- Application and bidding procedures

- Other essential information needed to participate in USDA programs and services

Contact

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Internet

<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/outreachassistance/sociallydisadvantagedfarmersranchers.html>

Partners for Fish and Wildlife

Providing technical and/or financial assistance for wildlife habitat restoration

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program is a proactive, voluntary program of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that provides technical and financial assistance to private (non-federal) landowners to restore fish and wildlife habitats on their land.

The program emphasizes the reestablishment of native vegetation and ecological communities for the benefit of fish and wildlife in concert with the needs and desires of private landowners.

The Fish and Wildlife Service also enlists the help of a wide variety of other partners to help restore wildlife habitat on private lands. These partners include other federal agencies, tribes, state and local governments, conservation organizations, academic institutions, businesses and industries, school groups, and private individuals.

Projects consist primarily of habitat restoration and enhancement. Activities include, but are not limited to:

- Restoring wetland hydrology by plugging drainage ditches, breaking tile drainage systems, installing water control structures, dike construction, and reestablishing old connections with waterways
- Planting native trees and shrubs in formerly forested wetlands and other habitats
- Planting native grasslands and other vegetation
- Installing fencing and off-stream livestock watering facilities to allow for restoration of stream and riparian areas
- Removing exotic plants and animals that compete with native fish and wildlife and alter their natural habitats
- Using prescribed burning as a method of removing exotic species and restoring natural disturbance regimes necessary for some species survival
- Reconstructing in-stream aquatic habitat through bioengineering techniques

The vast majority of existing and potential fish and wildlife habitat is on private, Tribal and other non-federal lands. The Fish and Wildlife Service recognizes the potential value of enlisting the active support of private landowners in restoring and maintaining wildlife habitat for future conservation

efforts in the United States.

The Fish and Wildlife Service provides financial and technical assistance to private landowners through voluntary cooperative agreements. Under cooperative agreements, landowners agree to maintain restoration projects as specified in the agreement, but they retain full control of the land. Landowners and national, state, and local organizations can serve as partners with the Service in carrying out restoration work on private lands.

Project Examples

Thousands of restoration projects have been supported by the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program since 1987, including:

- In Montana, Middle Fork and South Fork Dearborn landowners collaborated with the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, the U.S. Forest Service, Montana State Lands, the Lewis and Clark Weed District, the Lewis and Clark Conservation District and The Nature Conservancy to enhance control efforts on noxious weeds. The project included 3 spray days covering about 300 acres and the release of a biological control agent, leafy spurge beetles, at 30 sites effecting 3459 acres. Habitat restored included both riparian and upland areas.
- The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program in New York restored a 100 acre wetland in St. Lawrence County. The project involved construction of a low berm that plugged an agricultural ditch, restoring a 100 acre field to emergent marsh habitat. This high priority wetland restoration project is located in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan's St. Lawrence Valley Focus Area. This project is one of a number of wetland restoration projects in close proximity, forming a large complex of restored wetland acres. Multiple partners contributed to the project, including Ducks Unlimited and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The project provides waterfowl and other migratory birds with migration staging, resting, nesting, foraging, and brood habitat, and it also provides habitat for reptiles, amphibians, and other wildlife.

- The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program worked with the Fish and Wildlife's Coastal Program to assist J. F. Welder Heirs Cattle Company reclaim and conserve a total of 3,000 acres of native coastal prairie in Texas. This coastal prairie provides habitat for migratory grassland birds and potential habitat for the critically endangered Attwater's prairie chicken (*Tympanuchus cupido attwateri*). The 24,000 acres of cattle ranch properties include some of the largest and best examples of native coastal prairie left on earth. The project includes reducing brush canopy coverage to 5 percent and improving brush distribution to provide optimum habitat for bobwhite populations and potential habitat for prairie chickens. The Fish and Wildlife Service is working with the cattle company to develop a grazing management system that will provide nesting and brood-rearing habitat for grassland birds, maintain the dominance of desirable native grasses and forms, and contribute to the long-term viability of the ranching operation.

Application and Financial Information

Contact the appropriate regional office (see list in this entry). Your regional contact should be able to give you an idea of the appropriateness of your proposed project and probability of its support by Partners for Fish and Wildlife. The program aims for a 50 percent non-federal match for each project. Landowners and partner organizations provide this matching support.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Any private landowner with acreage that has the potential for restoration to its original habitat can apply for consideration in this program.

Landowners voluntarily offer the land base for restoration for a fixed term (at least 10 years although many extend the term). The program emphasizes the restoration of formerly degraded wetlands, native grasslands, riparian areas, and other habitats to conditions as close to natural as feasible.

Contact

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Greg Brown, Coordinator
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Internet

partners.fws.gov/

Pest Management Alternatives Program (PMAP)

Providing competitive grants supporting the development and implementation of pest management alternatives when regulatory action by EPA or voluntary cancellation by the registrant results in the unavailability of certain agricultural pesticides or pesticide uses

The Pest Management Alternatives special research grant supports projects that help farmers respond to the environmental and regulatory issues confronting agriculture. These special grant funds support research that provides farmers with replacement technologies for pesticides that are under consideration for regulatory action by EPA and for which producers do not have effective alternatives.

The passage of the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996 (FQPA) makes this special research grant of critical importance to the nation's farmers. New pest management tools are being developed to address critical pest problems identified by farmers and other stakeholders. New approaches to managing pests without some of the traditional pesticides are being developed.

Farmers have identified the lack of effective alternative pest management tactics as a primary reason for not implementing IPM on their farms. Where effective alternative tactics have been developed, they are widely and rapidly implemented by farmers. These special research grant funds are distributed on a competitive basis to all eligible research entities through the Pest Management Alternatives Program (PMAP).

Project Examples

- The University of California at Davis was awarded \$149,314 to evaluate low-rate herbicides and cover crops for weed control in vegetable crops. There are few vegetable herbicides and most of these are old. Many existing vegetable herbicides were registered decades ago when development costs were lower, markets were less competitive, and environmental regulations were less stringent. Some currently registered veg-

etable herbicides have environmental issues to overcome if they are to survive recent regulatory initiatives. The overall objective of this project is to find new weed control tools for broccoli, lettuce, and spinach.

- The University of Arkansas at Fayetteville was awarded \$128,814 to evaluate monitoring systems, pathogen detection, and alternative tactics for IPM of filth flies in poultry production facilities. The use of filth fly monitoring and alternatives to insecticides in broiler-breeder egg and turkey finishing production systems are practically nonexistent. In general, the poultry companies and producers depend completely on insecticides for fly control in these facilities. In this project, standard fly management procedures using insecticides will be compared with alternative biological control agents such as wasp parasites, insect parasitic nematodes, and pathogenic fungus. In addition, alternative methods of insecticide mixtures and application procedures such as wall spraying, spot-treatment of manure, and use of attractant/insecticide trapping devices will be evaluated.
- A grant of \$165,803 was awarded to Kansas State University at Manhattan to demonstrate alternative pest management for greenhouse bedding plants and to evaluate its economic feasibility for commercial greenhouse operations. The prospect of incurring economic losses from pests because chemical control options are unavailable is a risk that many U.S. agricultural producers face because of regulatory policies imposed under the Food Quality Protection Act. This project expects to make a major contribution to the multi-bil-

lion-dollar greenhouse bedding plant industry, and to U.S. agriculture in general, by demonstrating the practicality and profitability of a broad-based pest management program. The program expects to extend the longevity of valuable replacement pesticides and take advantage of effective biological controls in a way that not only allows growers to remain competitive, but also maximizes profits by reducing long-term risks.

Application and Financial Information

For copies of the full solicitation of proposals, the administrative provisions for the program, and the Application Kit (containing required forms, certifications, and instructions for preparing and submitting applications for funding), visit <http://www.reeusda.gov/1700/funding/ourfund.htm>, or contact:

Proposal Services Unit
Office of Extramural Programs
Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture; Stop 2245
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-2245
Phone: (202) 401-5048

When contacting the Proposal Services Unit, please indicate that you are requesting forms for the Pest Management Alternatives Program.

Grant amounts have typically been from \$85,000 to \$150,000 since 1996. About 10 to 12 grants are awarded annually.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Under this authority, subject to the availability of funds, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture may make grants for periods not to exceed 5 years to state agricultural experiment stations, all colleges and universities, other research institutions and organizations, federal agencies, private organizations or corporations, and individuals.

Proposals from scientists affiliated with foreign organizations are not eligible for funding nor are scientists who are directly or indirectly engaged in the registration of pesticides for profit; however, their collaboration with funded projects is encouraged.

CSREES seeks proposals that identify or develop replacement or mitigation technologies. The

program funds the identification and demonstration of pest management alternatives or mitigation procedures for one or more pesticides (from a list identified by CSREES). The focus should be on modifying existing approaches or introducing new methods, especially ecologically based methods, that can be rapidly brought to bear on pest management challenges resulting from implementation of FQPA.

Durability and practicality of the proposed pest management option(s) or mitigation procedure(s), and compatibility with integrated pest management systems are critical. Both technological and economic feasibility should be considered. Pest management alternatives or risk mitigation options identified should address various EPA risk concerns for pesticides being reviewed under FQPA (for example, dietary or worker exposure, groundwater or ecological risk). Replacements for methyl bromide are not addressed by this request for proposals.

Proposals must show evidence of significant involvement of producers or other pesticide user groups in project design and implementation, including data acquisition and analysis and the identification of potential solutions. Public-private partnerships and matching resources from non-federal sources, including producer or commodity groups, are encouraged. Proposals should describe how state and federal registrations of new pest management options will be obtained when they are required before use of new methods.

Contact

Monte Johnson
National Program Office
Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture; Stop 2220
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20250-2220
Phone: (202) 401-1108; Fax: (202) 401-4888
E-mail: mpjohnson@csrees.usda.gov

Internet

<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/pestmanagementalternativesrgp.html>

Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program (PESP)

Providing grants to be matched by states for projects aimed at reducing the risks and uses of pesticides in agricultural and nonagricultural settings

The Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program (PESP) is a voluntary program that forms partnerships with pesticide users to reduce the health and environmental risks associated with pesticide use and implement pollution prevention strategies. The EPA started the program in 1994.

There are two categories of membership in PESP:

- **Partners:** Organizations that use pesticides or represent pesticide users.
- **Supporters:** Organizations that do not use pesticides, but have significant influence over the pest management practices of pesticide users. (Food processors, for example, may influence the use of pesticides on produce they buy, even though they do not apply pesticides to the produce themselves.) Supporters may also include public interest groups whose constituencies have a strong interest in pesticide risk reduction.

All PESP members make a commitment to reduce pesticide risk and develop activities to achieve risk reduction.

Project Examples

- A grant of \$40,000 was given to the University of Maine for a study on management of the European fire ant in eastern Maine.
- The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey and the Rutgers University Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Institute were awarded \$40,000 for research on integrated pest management strategies for urban residential areas.
- Virginia Tech was awarded \$19,656 to develop integrated pest management training for Virginia schools.
- A \$40,000 grant was given to the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries and Auburn University to use a statewide coalition to implement IPM in schools.

- Oklahoma State University was granted \$39,935 for pesticide risk reduction using the PEET Multi-Objective Decision-Support System.
- A \$34,220 grant was awarded to the University of Nebraska for learning modules and in-service training for IPM in K-12 schools in Nebraska.

Application and Financial Information

Two separate grant programs are associated with PESP. Each is administered differently and has unique eligibility requirements.

- **Regional PESP Grants:** Also known as **Regional Initiative Grants**, these grants are administered by EPA's regional offices. These grants support pollution prevention projects that are important to and complement ongoing efforts in the EPA regional offices.
- **National Foundation for Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Education Grants:** Administered by the National Foundation for IPM Education, these grants support the overall goal of PESP, which is to reduce the risks from the use of pesticides in agricultural and non-agricultural settings in the United States.

The federal share of project grants is limited to a range of \$30,000 to \$40,000 of allowable project costs. Organizations receiving funds are required to match federal funds by at least 50 percent. For example, a grant request for \$30,000 would support a project of no less than \$60,000, with the state providing the balance. State contributions may come in the form of dollars, in-kind goods and services, and/or third party contributions. The project duration should be 18 to 24 months.

The EPA Regional Offices are responsible for all mailings of the Request for Proposals within each region. Proposals should be submitted to

regional offices for review and ranking. Proposals that the region ranks the highest are evaluated by a panel composed of headquarters and regional representatives. Funding decisions will be made based on the ranking panel's recommendations.

Criteria for evaluation of applications include but are not limited to the partner's progress toward developing a stewardship strategy, the technical merits of the project, the need for the project, and the potential of the project to contribute to meaningful and measurable pesticide risk and use reduction.

Proposals must be submitted on the format provided by the PESP. The deadline is generally in June. Notification is usually given in less than 30 days.

Application forms and instructions are available from the PESP website.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Projects must address the risk/use reduction goals of PESP, pesticide pollution prevention or integrated pest management (IPM). Other projects may be considered if they complement these goals, such as work with nutrient management.

The types of projects that will be considered include education, demonstration, outreach, and technology transfer. Construction projects are not permitted under this award.

All organizations with a commitment to pesticide use/risk reduction are eligible to join PESP,

either as partners or as supporters. Eligible applicants include the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, any U.S. territory or possession, any agency or instrumentality of a state, including state universities, and all federally recognized Native American tribes. For convenience, the term "state" in this notice refers to all eligible applicants.

Local governments, private universities, private nonprofit entities, private businesses, and individuals are not eligible. The organizations excluded from applying directly are encouraged to work with eligible applicants in developing proposals that include them as participants in the projects.

Contact your EPA Regional Environmental Stewardship Program coordinator for assistance in identifying potential project partners. The EPA strongly encourages this type of cooperative arrangement.

Contact

PESP

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

401 M St. SW (7511C)

Washington, DC 20460

Phone: (703) 308-8712 or (800) 972-7717

Fax: (703) 308-7026

Internet

<http://www.epa.gov/oppbppd1/PESP/>

Regional Integrated Pest Management Program

Providing competitive grants for research and extension activities related to integrated pest management (IPM) administered through regional networks

A competitive grants program for research and extension activities related to Integrated Pest Management (IPM) administered through four regional networks, the IPM Special Grants research program has been funded at about \$2.7 million annually. The corresponding extension program has been funded at about \$11 million per year, administered through land grants in each of the four regions.

Projects may span the spectrum from development of new IPM tactics to combined research-extension implementation projects to extension education and training. Because production systems and specific pest management problems vary significantly across the country, each of the four regions is given maximum flexibility in setting research and education priorities. Each region runs its own competition, establishing regional priorities for funding of projects.

Some priorities are crop-specific; others are based on various approaches to problem solving through IPM. Collaborators are encouraged in both programs. However, CSREES can only award funds to land grant universities as per funding legislation.

Project Examples

- The University of Illinois at Champaign was awarded \$79,460 to assess the potential for wheat, or wheat double-cropped with soybeans, to reduce western corn rootworm (WCR) injury to corn rotated with these crops by comparing movement and physiological characteristics of insects that enter crops rotated with corn. The project has three objectives: measure western corn rootworm movement between corn and
- rotated crops using a novel insect marking technique; measure the characteristics of adult WCR moving between corn and rotated crops; and relate WCR abundance in rotated fields to numbers of eggs deposited in the soil of each field and root injury ratings in corn the following year.
- A grant of \$110,884 was awarded to North Carolina State University at Raleigh, NC, to improve scouting and decision-making tools for weed management in field crops. Making weed management decisions that are environmentally and economically sound is a complex task. Most fields are infested with many different weed species, which vary greatly in their ability to cause crop losses and harvest difficulties and in their susceptibility to various herbicides. Researchers at North Carolina State University have developed three decision aids to assist weed managers in determining if enough weeds are in a particular field to justify treatment, and, if so, the appropriate herbicides and rates to apply: HADSS for desktop computers, Pocket HERB for handheld computers that can be used to give recommendations in the field, and WebHADSS that is accessible to anyone with an Internet connection and a Web browser. In this project, these decision aids will be modified to better meet the needs of extension agents, growers, and consultants.
- A project focusing on the electronic delivery of IPM information and decision support tools for field use was awarded a grant of \$29,526. Pest management decisions require integration of complex data and

information that changes dynamically throughout the season and from year to year. Electronic decision aids dramatically improve pest management decisions, but require portable palm-top technologies and improved results by factors of ten rather than simply delivering written information.

Project goals include:

- Design and deliver state-of-the-art navigational and decision support tools designed to click on the pest followed by automatic lists of options, environmental cautions, and reminders of long-term consequences of practices selected or sequenced
- Involve stakeholders in assessing and evaluating these features of educational delivery via web technologies to improve IPM decisions in agriculture

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Staff of land grant universities in the U.S. may apply for this competition. Other organizations and individuals may work only as collaborators or as subcontractors. This is highly encouraged by CSREES.

In each of the four regions, research and extension staff appointed by their respective agricultural experiment station and cooperative extension directors, work together to develop requests for proposals that ensure that available resources address priority pest management problems in the region.

Application and Financial Information

Requests for proposals are available through the Internet and by more conventional means in each of the four regions. Your regional contact person can suggest the best means to obtain information on funding opportunities, priorities for research and extension projects, and application deadlines.

Proposals are evaluated through a peer review process and ranked according to the goals and objectives of the program, scientific merit and appropriateness of budget. Funding recommendations are then submitted to CSREES by each region's administrative advisers.

Contact

James VanKirk, Director
Northeast Region
630 W. North St., Geneva NY 14456
Voice: (315) 787-2378
Fax: (315) 787-2360

Larry Olsen, Co-Director
North Central Region
Michigan State University
(517) 355-3459 (voice)
olsenl@msu.edu
Michael E. Gray
University of Illinois
Voice: (217) 333-6652

Norm Nesheim, Co-Director
Russ Mizell, Co-Director
Southern Region
Pesticide Information Office
University of Florida
Building 847; P.O. Box 110710
Gainesville, FL 32611-0710
Voice: (352) 392-4721

Rick Melnicoe, Director
Western Region
Meyer Hall
University of California, Davis
Voice: (530) 754-8378; Fax: (530) 754-8379

National Program Office
Cooperative State Research, Education, and
Extension Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Mail Stop 2220
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20250-2220
Phone: (202) 401-4939; Fax: (202) 401-4888

Internet

<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/integratedpestmanagement>
www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/integratedpestmgtnorthcentral.html
www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/integratedpestmgtnortheast.html
www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/integratedpestmgtsouth.html
www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/integratedpestmgtwest.html

Regional Rural Development Centers

Strengthening the capacity of local citizens to be key players in guiding the future of their rural communities

The USDA's four Regional Rural Development Centers play a unique national role in the USDA's service to rural America. Each center links the research and extension capacity of land-grant universities with local decision-makers to address cutting-edge regional and overarching national issues. They build partnerships with citizens, community organizations, politicians, local and state government officials, and private entrepreneurs to encourage locally led and sustainable development. They serve as leaders and primary facilitators of rural development research, education, and policy dialogues to help families, communities, farms and ranches, and businesses attain prosperity and security.

The centers were established by the Rural Development Act of 1972. The first was established for the North Central region at Iowa State University; subsequent centers were established for the Northeast region at Pennsylvania State University, the Southern region at Mississippi State University, and the Western region at Oregon State University, now at Utah State University. Each center is administered by a joint agreement between USDA and a host institution operating for the extension services and the experiment stations in the region.

Core funding comes from the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) and the regions' land-grant universities. Increasingly, other federal and state agencies, private foundations, and public interests contribute funding. A board of directors for each center is composed of administrators and faculty from the institutions, a representative of CSREES, and representatives from public and private agencies and foundations.

Information Available

Each of the rural development centers offers a variety of publications, newsletters, and reports

on rural development policy and implementation; information on regional and national poverty levels; reports on training opportunities offered by the federal government and nonprofit organizations; calendars listing rural development conferences and other events; news about funding opportunities; and regional and national links to other resources for rural community development.

Contact

Lionel J. (Bo) Beaulieu, Director
Southern Rural Development Center
Box 9656
410 Bost Extension Bldg.
Mississippi State, MS 39762
Phone: (662) 325-3207; Fax: (662) 325-8915
Website: <http://srdc.msstate.edu/>
E-mail: ljb@srdc.msstate.edu

Stephen J. Goetz, Director
Northeast Regional Center for Rural
Development
The Pennsylvania State University
7 Armsby Building
University Park, PA 16802-5602
Phone: 814/863-4656; Fax: 814/863-0586
Website: <http://www.cas.ncrcrd.psu.edu/>
E-mail: sgoetz@psu.edu

Cornelia Butler Flora, Director
North Central Regional Center for Rural
Development
Iowa State University
107 Curtiss Hall
Ames, IA 50011-1050
Phone: (515) 294-8321; Fax: (515) 294-3180
Website: www.ncrcrd.iastate.edu
E-mail: cflora@iastate.edu

Dr. John Allen, Director
Western Rural Development Center
Utah State University
8335 Old Main Hill
Logan, UT 84322-8335
Phone: (435) 797-9732; Fax: (435) 797-9733
Website: <http://extension.usu.edu/wrdc>
E-mail: wrdc@ext.usu.edu

For additional information:
Sally Maggard, National Program Leader
Economic and Community Systems
CSREES-USDA
1400 Independence Ave., NW, Stop 2215
Washington, DC 20250-2215
Phone: (202) 720-0741
E-mail: smaggard@csrees.usda.gov

Internet

Website addresses for each rural development center are listed in the contact information section.

Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements Program

*Assisting farmers, ranchers, and rural small businesses
in developing renewable energy systems
and making energy efficiency improvements to their operations*

The Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements program was authorized in Section 9006 of the 2002 Farm Bill. Housed in USDA's Rural Development agency, this program is conducted in collaboration with the Department of Energy.

In its first year, 2003, the program operated solely as a grant program, but in future years the program may expand to provide loans as well. In FY 2004, the program made \$22.8 million in grants available.

Project Examples

- In Virginia, funds were granted to help install approximately 301 65kw wind turbine generators to produce energy to be used by farmers and environmentally savvy consumers.
- In Washington, the program funded a grant to install a biomass energy utilization system to replace the use of 12,000 gallons of fossil fuels in a hazelnut farming nut-drying operation.
- In South Carolina, the program funded a project to develop a photovoltaic (PV) array system to generate energy needs of small farm enterprises of vegetables and fruits, meat goats, and re-circulating aquaponics systems. Excess energy generated will be sold to the local electric utility company.
- In Nebraska, this program funded a project to install radiant infrared tube heaters in the floor and to add insulation to the walls and ceiling of a housing production plant.

A list of 2003 grant recipients by state, indicating grant amounts, can be found at the USDA Rural Development website at:

<http://www.usda.gov/news/releases/2003/08/energylist.html>.

Application and Financial Information

As of this writing, \$23 million is expected to be available in Fiscal Year 2004 as was available in Fiscal Year 2003, when grants of \$21.2 million were awarded to 113 applicants in 24 states. In 2003, funding to assist with the development of renewable energy systems included:

- 35 applications totaling \$7.4 million to support wind power
- 30 applications totaling \$7 million for anaerobic digesters
- 6 applications totaling \$1.1 million for solar projects
- 16 applications totaling \$3.9 million for ethanol plants/anaerobic digesters, direct combustion, and fuel pellet systems

Awards were made on a competitive basis for the purchase of renewable energy systems and to make energy efficiency improvements.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Energy efficiency projects must reduce energy consumption by at least 15 percent. Applicants for the Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements program must be agricultural producers, rural small businesses, U.S. citizens and/or legal residents, and have demonstrated financial need. Rural Development grant funds may be used to pay up to 25 percent of the eligible project costs.

Eligible projects include those that derive energy from a wind, solar, biomass, or geothermal source, or hydrogen derived from biomass or

water using wind, solar, or geothermal energy sources. Awards are made on a competitive basis for the purchase of renewable energy systems and to make energy efficiency improvements.

Contact

Tim McNeilly
Phone: (202) 690-0498
E-mail: tim.mcneilly@usda.gov

Alisa Harrison
Phone: (202) 720-4623
E-mail: alisa.harrison@usda.gov

John Moore
Phone: (312) 848-1238

People may also contact USDA Rural Development offices in each state.

Internet

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/farmbill/04fbnofa.htm>

Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D)

Providing technical assistance to local communities to stimulate economies and natural resources

The Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) program provides technical assistance to local communities through designated USDA areas led by RC&D Councils. The purpose of the program is to accelerate the conservation, development and use of natural resources while improving the general level of economic activity and standard of living in communities across the nation. RC&D Councils coordinate conservation and rural development assistance available from USDA, other federal, state, and local government and nongovernmental sources.

Central to RC&D is the idea that local people know what is best for their communities. The RC&D Councils (volunteers representing public and private sector sponsors and other local organizations) undertake community driven actions that are strategically focused on regional resource conservation and economic viability.

To date, 375 areas across the United States, Guam, American Samoa, Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and Virgin Islands have been designated by the Secretary of Agriculture as RC&D areas. RC&D Councils, as nonprofit organizations, serve more than 85 percent of U.S. counties and more than 77 percent of the United States.

The USDA provides technical assistance in the form of a local staff person (an "RC&D coordinator") to support each multi-county RC&D area. The RC&D Council identifies the environmental, economic, and social needs of that area. Goals, objectives, project priorities, and the resources needed are documented in an area plan.

The RC&D coordinator, supported by USDA, serves the council by helping complete project designs and get projects underway by assisting the council to locate the necessary resources. Resources may include technical or financial assistance from USDA agencies, state or local governments, local conservation districts, or private industry.

RC&D activities as outlined in the council's "area plan" address land conservation, water management, community development, and land management issues. These include:

- Controlling erosion and sedimentation
- Conserving and improving the quality of water, including irrigation and rural water supplies
- Mitigating impacts of floods and high water tables
- Repairing and improving reservoirs
- Improving agricultural water management
- Developing resource-based industries
- Protecting rural industries and people from natural resource hazards
- Developing adequate rural water and waste disposal systems
- Improving opportunities for recreation and tourism
- Improving the quality of rural housing
- Providing adequate health and education facilities
- Satisfying essential transportation and communication needs
- Promoting food security, economic development, and education
- Promoting energy conservation, including the production of energy crops
- Protecting agricultural land, as appropriate, from conversion to other uses
- Creating, improving, and protecting fish and wildlife habitat

Project Examples

- The Coastal Georgia RC&D Council obtained funding for an Erosion and Sediment Control Inspector for the Coastal Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) that serves five counties in Georgia. The goal is to reduce erosion and sediment control violations by improving the skills of local issuing authorities and of

builders in construction site Best Management Practices (BMP).

- The Big Sandy RC&D in Kentucky provided grant writing assistance and coordination efforts to the Floyd County Fiscal Court and the Floyd County Board of Education for their New Century Aquaponics Project. The project provides entrepreneur training, start-up assistance, and regional marketing for future "aquaponic" operations in eastern Kentucky. Aquaponics is a method of raising fish and plants in a closed system housed in a greenhouse.
- Partnering with the U.S. Forest Service and the Virginia Department of Forestry, four RC&D Councils are working together to reduce fire risks in wooded subdivisions through education and conversion of wild-fire fuel to marketable products in southeastern Virginia. Several grants were folded together to assess the fire risk in the communities and to make presentations to community leaders, planners, and fire departments about the need for risk reduction and techniques of "FireWise" planning. Five full-day workshops provided attendees with the essential elements of planning wooded subdivisions for wildfire prevention.
- The Green Hills RC&D Council's Wetland Interpretive Center in Missouri sponsors a wetland development site with wide implications for tourism, education, and healthy recreation. The project started as a 240-acre wetland mitigation site with the Missouri Department of Conservation and has grown into a locally supported community project. Earth moving of over 1 million cubic yards and planting of wetland trees and shrubs were part of the designed wetland in 2002. The development of boardwalks, viewing platforms, and recreation trails is continuing.
- Controlling urban sprawl and creating sustainable communities is a focus of the

Western Reserve RC&D in Northeast Ohio. The council secured private funding to staff a farmland preservation office and hire a consultant to assist communities with development alternatives. The project has reached more than 175 communities, 24 of which have adopted conservation development zoning.

Application and Financial Information

Written applications must be in the form outlined in the National Resource Conservation and Development Manual. Details of the procedure are available from state and field offices of NRCS. Designation of a new RC&D area depends on the level of appropriations for the program. Funding available for RC&D areas in fiscal year 2003 was \$49.079 million.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Eligible applicants are state and local governments, Tribes, and nonprofit organizations with authority to plan or carry out activities relating to resource use and development in multi-jurisdictional areas working through designated RC&D Councils.

Contact

To find out about RC&D activities in your area, contact your local NRCS office. Check your telephone directory under U.S. Government, Department of Agriculture.

National Program Office
USDA/NRCS
National RC&D Program Manager
Stop 2890, Room 6013-S
1400 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20250-2890
Phone: (202) 720-0557; Fax: (202) 690-0639

Internet

www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/rcd/

Risk Management Partnership Agreements (RMA)

Providing partnership agreements to advance agricultural research and development, education, and community outreach

The USDA's Risk Management Agency offers Partnership Agreements to advance its work in three program areas: Research and Development (R&D), Education, and Community Outreach.

R&D: The Research Management Research Partnerships fund qualified public and private organizations to research and develop new non-insurance risk management tools. For example, these tools may include risk mitigation for livestock, forage and rangeland, and organic producers. Project objectives to fund research activities may vary each year.

Education: The Commodity Partnerships for Risk Management Education and the Crop Insurance Education in Targeted States are aimed at educating producers about how to use financial management, crop insurance, marketing contracts, and other existing and emerging risk management tools. The Targeted States program delivers crop insurance education and information through cooperative agreements to producers in fifteen states that have been specifically designated as historically underserved with respect to crop insurance.

Outreach: The Community Outreach and Assistance Partnership Program aims to ensure that information on how to use such tools is effectively targeted to women, limited-resource, socially disadvantaged, and other traditionally underserved producers of priority commodities. The RMA maintains an active presence in collaborating with the partners it funds to implement the work designated by its agreements.

Risk management tools aren't limited to insurance products, but include a variety of risk management options and strategies to assist producers in mitigating risks inherent in agricultural production. They may include financial management tools to mitigate price and production risks; tools to enhance measurement and prediction of risks

in order to facilitate risk diversification; and tools to improve production management, harvesting, record keeping, or marketing.

Project Examples

Research and Development Partnership Agreements

- The Rodale Institute received two grants. One was for \$718,314 to expand the geographic scope of the Organic Price Index. The second was for \$2,328,519 to develop an enhanced Organic Transition Simulation Model to help farmers analyze a wide variety of risk factors and costs when considering a transition to organic.
- Iowa State University received \$438,738 to develop and implement a web-based management system for organic apple growers in the Eastern United States.
- The Rural Coalition received \$715,000 to develop and provide risk management tools to reduce risk exposure and increase health and safety through farmworker/farmer partnership and training.

Commodity Partnerships for Risk Management Education

- Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Services (MOSES) received \$129,775 to deliver risk management training, tools, and resources that address the needs of Wisconsin farmers engaged in organic production, marketing, and accessing new markets for farm products.
- Small Farm Today received \$96,600 to change awareness and behavior in new and beginning small farmers and ranchers in Missouri by giving them information about managing risk with specialty crops and livestock to help them farm more successfully and sustainably.

Crop Insurance Education and Information Programs in Targeted States

- The New England Small Farm Institute received \$221,426 to deliver crop insurance education and information to Massachusetts producers.

Community Outreach and Assistance Partnership Agreements

- Growing Power of Milwaukee, WI, received \$75,000 to provide follow-up technical assistance and risk management education workshops on production, marketing, finances, human resources, and legal risk. Training will focus on sustainable farming practices, food processing, packaging, and marketing.
- Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAGE) received \$75,000 to create innovative, replicable strategies that link solutions to the market development and land access needs of underserved specialty crop producers.
- The Minnesota Department of Agriculture received \$85,410 to implement a variety of strategies to deliver risk management tools that will help organic producers assess and manage production and economic (including marketing) risks associated with organic systems.

A complete listing of 2003 agreements can be found at the following websites:

R&D:

<http://www.rma.usda.gov/news/2003/10/03rdtable.html>

Education:

<http://www.rma.usda.gov/news/2003/10/03educationtable.html>

Outreach:

<http://www.rma.usda.gov/news/2003/10/03outreachtable.html>

Application and Financial Information

Application information is available at the RMA website at <http://www.rma.usda.gov>. Applicants may also request application materials from the contacts listed below.

Education and Outreach Agreements are for up to 1 year. Research and Development Partnership Agreements may last up to 3 years. Except for Education Agreements, wherein levels are partially determined by formulas explained in the application materials, these agreements have no maximum or minimum funding levels. In 2003, \$24.7 million in partnership agreements was awarded, including \$10.6 million in Research and

Development Agreements, \$5 million for Community Outreach and Assistance Agreements with 49 community-based partners, and \$9.1 million in Education Partnership Agreements, including \$4.5 million for the Targeted States Program for crop insurance education in 15 historically underserved states.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

For all three programs, individuals are ineligible to apply. Eligible applicants for the Research Partnerships are all colleges and universities; federal, state and local agencies; nonprofit and for-profit private organizations; or corporations and other entities.

For both kinds of Education Partnerships, eligible applicants include state departments of agriculture, universities, nonprofit agricultural organizations, and other public or private organizations able to lead a local program of risk management or crop insurance education. For the Outreach Partnerships, eligible applicants include educational institutions; community-based organizations; and associations of farmers, ranchers and other nonprofit organizations with demonstrated abilities to develop and implement risk management and other marketing options for priority commodities.

Partnership agreement funds may not be used for building or equipment purchases, rental or repair, to repair or maintain privately owned vehicles, or to prepare a partnership agreement application.

Contact

David W. Fulk

Research Management Research Partnerships

Phone (816) 926-6343; Fax (816) 926-7343

E-mail: david.fulk@rma.usda.gov

Michelle Fuller

Commodity Partnerships for Risk Management

Education and the Crop Insurance Education in Targeted States

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Community Outreach and Assistance Partnerships

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Internet

<http://www.rma.usda.gov>

Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA)

Helping communities develop nature-based recreation and conserve environmental, historic, and cultural resources

RTCA provides assistance to nonprofit organizations, community groups, Tribes or Tribal governments, and local or state government agencies. This assistance includes:

- Building partnerships to achieve community-set goals
- Assessing resources
- Developing concept plans
- Engaging public participation
- Identifying potential sources of funding
- Creating public outreach
- Organizational development
- Providing conservation and recreation information

National Park Service staff for the RTCA program are based in 35 field locations to make them more readily accessible to nonprofit organizations and local and state governments in all 50 states. In 2003, we assisted 315 community projects, which included trails and greenway planning; open space protection; river conservation; watershed planning; rail-trail conversions; and urban greening.

Each year, our partners protect over 1,000 miles of rivers, create 700 miles of trails, and conserve over 30,000 acres of open space. By working side by side with grassroots groups and local governments in communities throughout the country, the National Park Service is building a nationwide system of parks, open spaces, rivers, and trails.

Project Examples

RTCA assists locally led conservation efforts that:

- Link parks, schoolyards, open spaces and residential areas with safe, quiet greenways
- Put sparkle back into neglected waterways;

- Restore significant cultural and historic assets
- Recycle abandoned railways into trails that link neighborhoods and communities
- Preserve open spaces for future generations

Application and Financial Information

Contact regional program staff to discuss your interest and seek guidance before applying. Applications for RTCA assistance are competitively evaluated by regional offices, based on how well the applications meet the following criteria:

- A clear anticipated outcome leading to on-the-ground success
- Commitment, cooperation, and cost-sharing by interested public agencies and nonprofit organizations
- Opportunity for significant public involvement
- Protection of significant natural and/or cultural resources and enhancement of outdoor recreational opportunities
- Consistency with the National Park Service mission and RTCA goals

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Private nonprofit organizations and federal, state, and local government agencies are eligible for assistance. Proposals must demonstrate commitment of cost sharing that may include donations of time, cash, and services. Proposed assistance is generally for 1 to 2 years.

Contact

For more information on the RTCA program and procedures for requesting assistance, contact your regional National Park Service office or the Washington, DC, headquarters, as listed in this entry.

Alaska Region
2525 Gambell Street
Anchorage, AK 99503-2892
Phone: (907) 257-2650

Intermountain Region
Intermountain Support Office
12795 West Alameda Parkway
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, CO 80225-0287
Phone: (303) 969-2855
CO, MT, UT and WY

Midwest Region
AR, IL, IN, IA, KS, MI, MN, MO, NE, ND, OH,
SD and WI
1709 Jackson Street
Omaha, NE 68102-2571
Phone: (330) 657-2950

Northeast Region
CT, ME, MA, NH, N J, NY, RI, and VT
Boston Support Office
15 State Street
Boston, MA 02109
Phone: (617) 223-5123

Pacific West Region
CA, HI, and NV
Pacific Great Basin Support Office
600 Harrison Street
Suite 600
San Francisco, CA 94107-1372
Phone: (415) 427-1447

Southeast Region
AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, PR, SC, TN, and
the VI
Atlanta Federal Center
1924 Building
100 Alabama Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30303
Phone: (404) 562-3175

National Program Office
Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance
Program
1849 C Street, Org Code 2220
Washington, DC 20240
Phone: (202) 354-6900; Fax: (202) 371-5179

Internet

www.ncrc.nps.gov/rtca

Rural Business Enterprise Grants (RBEG)

Providing grants for assisting small and emerging rural businesses through nonprofits and public bodies

The purpose of the Rural Business Enterprise Grants (RBEG) program is to finance and facilitate the development of small and emerging private business enterprises in rural areas through grants to public bodies, nonprofits, and federally recognized Indian Tribal groups. This includes starting and operating revolving loan funds, business incubators, and industrial parks.

Grant funds may also be used for the acquisition and development of land and the construction of buildings, plants, equipment, access streets and roads, parking areas, and utility and service extensions; refinancing; fees for professional services; technical assistance and training; startup operating costs and working capital through a loan from a revolving loan fund, providing financial assistance to a third party; production of television programs to provide information to rural residents; and creating, expanding, and operating rural distance learning networks.

Application and Financial Information

Applicants must submit supporting data before making a formal application. After determining the order of funding priorities, the Rural Business - Cooperative Services office will tentatively determine eligibility and request applicants to submit formal applications.

Application forms are available from and may be filed in any state USDA Rural Development office, but applications are usually processed in a district or area office. Grant amounts are based on need and available appropriate funds. The funding level in Fiscal Year 2003 was \$51.4 million.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

The RBEG program is for nonprofits and public bodies to assist small and emerging businesses in rural areas. A rural area is defined as any area other than a city or town that has a popula-

tion of more than 50,000 and the urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to such a city or town. Public bodies include incorporated towns and villages, boroughs, townships, counties, states, authorities, districts, and Native American Tribes on federal and state reservations, and other federally recognized Indian Tribal groups in rural areas.

RBEG funds cannot be used for agricultural production (through growing, cultivation, and harvesting directly or through horizontally integrated operation), areawide planning; loans by grantees with unreasonable terms, rates, and charges; development of a proposal that could pull business activity or jobs away from one area to another; development of a proposal that could result in an area with too many goods or materials and not enough demand.

All funded projects are subject to an environmental assessment in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. Applicants for grants to establish a revolving loan fund must include details on their experience operating a revolving loan program, proposed projects, and financial ability to operate a revolving fund, and plans for leveraging.

Contact

To receive an application, contact one of the 47 USDA Rural Development State Offices where the project is located.

Amy Cavanaugh
National Program Office
USDA, Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS)
Room 6868 South Building, Stop 3225
Washington, DC 20250
Phone: (202) 720-1400; Fax: (202) 720-2213

Internet

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/buspr/rbeg.htm>

Rural Business Opportunity Grants (RBOG)

Providing grants to nonprofits and public bodies for community planning, technical assistance, and training for rural businesses

The purpose of the Rural Business Opportunity Grants Program is to promote sustainable economic development in rural communities with exceptional needs. This is accomplished by making grants to pay costs of providing economic planning for rural communities, technical assistance for rural businesses, or training for rural entrepreneurs or economic development officials.

Application and Financial Information

Projects eligible for RBOG funding compete based on certain grant selection criteria. Priority points are awarded to those projects that best meet these criteria and are ranked from the highest to the lowest scoring. The criteria include the sustainability and quality of the economic activity expected; the amount of leveraging of other funds; economic conditions in the service area, and the project's usefulness as a new best practice.

Applications are funded up to the maximum amount available in any given funding cycle. The statutory limit for fiscal year 2004 is \$1.5 million. The size of grants approved is limited by the amount of program funds available. Most FY 2004 grants will be \$50,000 or less.

You may file applications with the Rural Development State Office in the state where the grant purposes will be carried out. First, obtain a copy of the program regulation (4284-G) and refer to the application section. A complete application must be filed before it will be scored. An application can be obtained at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/busp/rbog.htm>.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

To be eligible for a Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG), an applicant must be a public body, nonprofit corporation, Indian Tribe, or cooperative with members that are primarily rural residents.

You must also have significant expertise in the activities you propose to carry out with the

grant funds and financial strength to ensure you can accomplish the objectives of the proposed grant.

You must also be able to show that the funding will result in economic development of a rural area (which is defined as any area other than a city or town that has a population of greater than 50,000 inhabitants and the urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to such a city or town). Your project must include a basis for determining the success or failure of the project and assessing its impact.

Grant funds may not be used for:

- Duplication of current services or replace or substitute support previously provided
- Costs of preparing the application
- Costs incurred before the date of the grant
- Political activities
- Acquisition of real estate, building construction, or development

Contact

Additional information, copies of the regulations, and forms can be obtained by contacting any USDA Rural Development State Office. Check your telephone directory under "Federal Government" or visit the Rural Development Field Office website to obtain addresses and telephone numbers of state offices.

For further information on this program, please call the state office servicing your state.

Marc Warman
National Program Office
Rural Business-Cooperative Service
Specialty Lenders Division
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Stop 3225
Washington, DC 20250-1521
Phone: (202) 720-6819; Fax: (202) 720-2213

Internet

www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/busp/rbog.htm

Rural Cooperative Development Grant Program (RCDG)

Providing grants for establishing and operating centers for cooperative development

Rural Cooperative Development Grants are made for establishing and operating centers for cooperative development to improve the economic condition of rural areas by developing new cooperatives and improving operations of existing cooperatives. The USDA tries to encourage and stimulate the development of effective cooperative organizations in rural America as a part of its total package of rural development efforts.

In Fiscal Year 2003, RCDG awarded grants totaling about \$6.3 million to 21 applicants.

Project Examples

Examples of cooperative development activities that could be funded under this program include:

- Providing services to newly developing cooperatives in its geographic area on organizational guidance, cooperative development strategies, business plans, and feasibility analyses
- Arranging training on cooperative organization and management skills
- Developing expertise in financial management, bookkeeping/accounting, and cooperative law to enable hands-on assistance to developing cooperatives
- Evaluating the potential for development of a base of support for cooperative programs within local communities to ensure that needed leadership is mobilized

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Nonprofit corporations and institutions of higher education are eligible to receive grants.

Grants may go to eligible recipients in rural areas to form and operate centers for cooperative development — for providing education, research, and technical assistance to rural cooperatives and assisting the cooperative development process.

Grants may be awarded for up to 75 percent of the total cost of the project. The applicant must contribute at least 25 percent from nonfederal sources.

Grants are awarded on a competitive basis and are based on specific selection criteria. These criteria are published each year in Federal Register notices.

Preference will be given to applications that:

- Demonstrate a proven track record in administering a national, regional, or state-wide project
- Demonstrate previous expertise in providing technical assistance to cooperatives in rural areas
- Demonstrate the ability to assist in the retention of business
- Facilitate the establishment of cooperatives and new cooperative approaches, and generate employment opportunities that will improve the economic conditions of rural areas
- Demonstrate the ability to create horizontal linkages among cooperative businesses within and among various sectors in rural areas of the United States and vertical linkages to domestic and international markets
- Commit to providing technical assistance and other services to underserved and eco-

nomically distressed rural areas of the United States

- Commit to providing more than a 25 percent matching contribution with private funds and in-kind contributions
- Show evidence of transferability or demonstration value to assist rural areas outside of project area
- Demonstrate that any cooperative development activity is consistent with positive environmental stewardship

Contact

James E. Haskell, Assistant Deputy Administrator,
Cooperative Services
National Program Office
Rural Business-Cooperative Services
Stop 3250, Room 4016 South Building
1400 Independence Ave S.W.
Washington, DC 20250-3250
Phone: (202) 720-8460; Fax: (202) 720-4641
E-mail: james.haskell@usda.gov

Internet

www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/rcdg/rcdg.htm

Rural Economic Development Loans and Grants (REDLG)

Providing zero-interest loans and grants to rural electric and telephone utilities to promote economic development and job creation

The Rural Economic Development Loans and Grants (REDLG) program makes direct zero-interest loans and grants to Rural Utilities Service (RUS) electric and telecommunication utilities that use the funds to provide financing for business and community development projects. Zero-interest loans are provided to finance a broad array of projects, including for-profit businesses.

Grants are provided to the RUS utility to establish a revolving loan fund to finance such purposes as community development assistance, education and training for economic development, medical care, telecommunications for education, job training or medical services, business incubators and technical assistance. Program funds can be used for value-added projects.

Project Example

- A \$450,000 zero-interest loan was made to an electric utility in Iowa to pass through to a start-up value-added pork processing facility in Keokuk County, IA. The facility will cook and smoke pork products and package them for targeted ethnic markets.

Application and Financial Information

The USDA state offices of Rural Development generally are delegated loan approval authority on a case-by-case basis. Application reviews and advice are available through state offices.

Maximum awards are determined annually. For FY 2003, the maximum loan was \$450,000 and the maximum grant was \$200,000. Maturity for loans is a maximum of 10 years.

Applications are scored on job creation potential, sustainability of projects, suitability to the area, diversification of employment in the area, amount of supplemental funds, relative income, and employment levels.

The funding level for FY 2003 for loans and grants was \$15 million and \$4 million, respectively. Estimated funding for FY 2004 for loans and grants is \$15 million and \$4 million, respectively.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Only RUS electric and telecommunication utilities are eligible. Loans are provided to finance a broad array of projects, including for-profit businesses.

Grants are provided to establish revolving loan funds to finance purposes such as community development assistance, education and training for economic development, medical care, telecommunications for education, job training or medical services, business incubators, and technical assistance.

Contact

The 47 state offices for USDA's Rural Development Program (formerly the Farmers Home Administration) deliver the REDLG program (along with other business and community programs). For more information and applications, contact your state USDA Rural Development office or any Rural Development field office. Applications are not available through the national program office, but inquiries are welcome.

Diane M. Berger, Senior Loan Specialist
National Program Office
USDA, Rural Business-Cooperative Service
14th and Independence Ave, SW, STOP 3225
Washington, DC 20250
Phone: (202) 720-1400; Fax: (202) 720-2213
E-mail: diane.berger@usda.gov

Internet

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ny/redlg.htm>

SCORE Association — Counselors to America's Small Business

Providing management and mentoring assistance for small businesses

SCORE is a nonprofit organization sponsored by the Small Business Administration (SBA) and dedicated to helping small businesses prosper since 1964.

SCORE's 389 locally organized, self-administered chapters offer services throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, and Guam. Volunteers are trained as counselors, advisers, and mentors to work in management and training for existing small businesses and for those considering going into business.

SCORE tries to match client needs with a counselor whose experience is in a comparable line of business. Check with your local SCORE office to determine if counselors with relevant expertise are available. SCORE can offer pre-business counseling, existing business counseling, and mentoring sessions for no charge.

SCORE also provides low-cost local workshops on business planning, management, financing, and marketing. If no local counselor has relevant experience, search online at www.score.org to establish e-mail counseling sessions. Log on and click "Ask SCORE."

Application and Financial Information

Potential clients should contact their local SBA or SCORE office to request a meeting with a counselor. The SCORE chapter volunteers will check their rosters to try to pair clients with counselors who have relevant business experience.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Any small independent business can receive help from SCORE. Clients need not have an SBA loan to receive support. SCORE services also are available to nonprofit associations. SCORE is a free business counseling service available to all American businesses.

Contact

To locate the SCORE office nearest you, check your local telephone directory or call (800) 634-0245 or send a fax to (202) 205-7636. For the hearing impaired, the TDD number is (202) 205-7333.

National Program Office
The SCORE Association
409 Third Street, S.W., 6th Floor
Washington, DC 20024
Phone: (800) 634-0245
E-mail: contact.score@sba.gov

Internet

www.score.org

Visit SCORE's award-winning website for more than 2,000 pages of small business "how to" and trend articles, to find your nearest counseling location, and to receive counseling via e-mail.

Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)

Awarding grants to states, United States territories, and federally recognized Indian Tribal governments to provide low-income seniors with coupons that can be exchanged for eligible foods at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture programs

The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program aims to:

- Provide resources in the form of fresh, nutritious, unprepared, locally grown fruits, vegetables, and culinary herbs from farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community-supported agriculture programs to low-income seniors
- Increase the domestic consumption of agricultural commodities by expanding or aiding in the expansion of domestic farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community-supported agriculture programs
- Develop or help develop new and additional farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture programs.

For FY 2003, Congress appropriated \$15 million for the SFMNP.

Project Examples

In March 2003, the USDA awarded \$16.7 million in grants to 35 states, the District of Columbia, three Indian Tribal organizations, and Puerto Rico. State departments of agriculture, aging, and health and Tribal governments administering the grants developed creative partnerships to expand service to seniors and certify and distribute benefits to the estimated 500,000 low-income seniors the program is expected to serve.

In FY 2002, fresh, nutritious, unprepared, locally grown fruits, vegetables, and culinary

herbs were available from more than 8,500 farmers at 1,200 farmers' markets, as well as 900 roadside stands and nearly 49 community-supported agriculture programs.

To eliminate barriers to access, several programs are providing seniors with transportation to and from the markets through a partnership with senior centers or have arranged for local growers to take their produce directly to senior housing facilities.

Application and Financial Information

The USDA's Food and Nutrition Service administers the program and awards grants to individual state agencies to fund it. The state agencies then distribute the money to low-income seniors in the form of coupons. The website for the state contacts is <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/SeniorFMNP/SFMNPcontacts2003.htm>.

In FY 2003, the SFMNP operated in 35 states, three Indian tribal organizations, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia, an increase over 2002.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Low-income seniors, generally defined as individuals who are at least 60 years old and who have household incomes of not more than 185 percent of the federal poverty income guidelines (published each year by the Department of Health and Human Services), are the targeted

recipients of SFMNP benefits. Some state agencies accept proof of participation or enrollment in another means-tested program, such as the Commodity Supplemental Food Program or the Food Stamp Program, for SFMNP eligibility.

SFMNP benefits are provided to eligible recipients for use during the harvest season. In some states, the SFMNP season is relatively short because the growing season in that area is not very long. In other states with longer growing seasons, recipients have a longer period in which to use their SFMNP benefits.

The grant funds may be used only to support the costs of the foods provided under the SFMNP; no administrative funding is available.

Contact

Donna Hines
WIC at FNS Headquarters
Supplemental Food Programs Division
Food and Nutrition Service - USDA
3101 Park Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22302
E-mail: donna.hines@fns.usda.gov
Phone: (703) 305-2746; Fax: (703) 305-2196
E-mail: wichq-web@fns.usda.gov

Internet

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/seniorFMNP/SFMNPmenu.htm>

Small Business Certified Development Company Program (504)

Stimulating creation of jobs by providing fixed asset financing to small firms for the construction or rehabilitation of owner-occupied or leased premises

The 504 Certified Development Company (504 CDC) Program of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) makes loans available to growing businesses with long-term, fixed-rate financing for major fixed assets through SBA Certified Development Companies (CDCs).

Loans can be used to acquire land, buildings, machinery, and equipment; and for building, modernizing, renovating, or restoring existing facilities and sites.

CDCs are private, nonprofit corporations whose purpose is to contribute to the economic development of their communities by assisting small businesses. There are about 270 CDCs nationwide.

Although the total size of projects using CDC financing is unlimited, the maximum amount of SBA participation in any individual project is usually \$1 million. Typical projects range from \$500,000 to \$2 million, with the average project totaling \$1 million. The average SBA participation in any project is \$460,000.

Project Examples

A typical project includes approximately 50 percent financing by a bank.

Application and Financial Information

Initial contact should be made through a local CDC.

Interest rates are based on the current market rate for 5- and 10-year U.S. Treasury issues, plus an increment above the Treasury rate, based on market conditions. Maturities of 10 and 20 years are available. Repayment is made in monthly, level-debt installments.

Collateral typically includes a mortgage on the land and the building being financed, liens on machinery, equipment and fixtures, and lease assignments. Private sector lenders are secured by a first lien on the project. The SBA is secured by a second lien. The SBA also requires personal guaranties from all people who own 20 percent or more of the small business borrower.

SBA regulations specify limits on fees that must be paid in connection with SBA financing.

Eligibility, Uses and Restrictions

To be eligible, a business must be a for-profit corporation, partnership, or proprietorship. Under the 504 Program, the business qualifies if its net worth does not exceed \$7 million, and its average net profit after taxes does not exceed \$2.5 million in the previous 2 years. Loans cannot be made to businesses engaged in speculation, investment in rental real estate, gambling, lending, or nonprofit concerns.

Loan proceeds may be used for fixed asset projects such as:

- Buying existing buildings
- Buying land in connection with the construction of a building
- Making land improvements such as grading, street improvements, utilities, parking lots and landscaping
- Construction
- Modernizing, renovating or converting existing facilities
- Buying machinery and equipment
- Paying interest on interim financing
- Paying professional fees directly attributable to the project, such as surveying, engineer-

ing, architect, appraisal, legal, and accounting fees

The 504 Program cannot be used for working capital or inventory, consolidating or repaying debt, refinancing, or financing a plant not located in the United States, its territories, and possessions.

Contact

Contact your local chamber of commerce or the economic development authority in your city, county, or state government who can identify local Certified Development Companies. You

may also call any SBA District office for assistance in locating a Certified Development Company.

Check the telephone directory under "United States Government" for the nearest SBA office or call the Small Business Answer Desk (800) U-ASK-SBA. For the hearing impaired, the TDD number is (704) 344-6640.

Internet

www.sba.gov

CDC Program:

<http://www.sba.gov/financing/sbaloan/cdc504.html>

Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Program

A broadband service delivery network making a significant, strategic investment in building and enhancing local economies in the United States, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) administers the Small Business Development Center Program (SBDC) to provide management assistance to current and prospective small business owners. The program is a cooperative effort of the private sector, the educational community, and federal, state, and local governments. It enhances economic development by providing small businesses with management and technical assistance.

There are now 63 Lead Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) — one in every state (Texas has four, California has six), the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, Samoa, and the U.S. Virgin Islands — with a network of more than 1,100 service locations.

In each state, there is a lead organization that sponsors the SBDC and manages the program. The lead organization coordinates program services offered to small businesses through a network of subcenters and satellite locations in each state. Subcenters are located at colleges, universities, community colleges, vocational schools, chambers of commerce, and economic development corporations.

SBDC assistance is tailored to the local community and the needs of individual clients. Each center develops services in cooperation with local SBA district offices to ensure statewide coordination with other available resources.

Each center has a director, staff members, volunteers, and part-time personnel. Qualified individuals recruited from professional and trade associations, the legal and banking community, academia, chambers of commerce, and SCORE (the Service Corps of Retired Executives) are among those who donate their services. SBDCs also use paid consultants, consulting engineers, and testing laboratories from the private sector to help clients who need specialized expertise.

The SBA provides 50 percent or less of the operating funds for each state SBDC; one or more sponsors provide the rest. These matching fund contributions are provided by state legislatures, private sector foundations and grants, state and local chambers of commerce, state-chartered economic development corporations, public and private universities, vocational and technical schools, community colleges, etc. Increasingly, sponsors' contributions exceed the minimum 50 percent matching share.

Project Examples

Client confidentiality prohibits SBDC staff from providing examples.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Assistance from SBDC is available to anyone interested in beginning a small business for the first time or improving or expanding an existing small business, who cannot afford the services of a private consultant.

Specific uses and offerings vary among SBDCs. Some may have programs or offerings specifically directed at agricultural businesses; others may not. Contact your local SBDC for more information.

Contact

The SBA has offices located throughout the country. For the one nearest you, consult the website or the telephone directory under "U.S. Government," or call the Small Business Answer Desk at (800) 8-ASK-SBA or (202) 205-7064 (fax). For the hearing impaired, the TDD number is (202) 205-7333.

Internet

<http://www.sba.gov/sbdc/>

Small Business Innovation Research Program (SBIR)

Providing grants for feasibility studies and product research and development to small businesses

Ten federal agencies grant funds from the USDA's Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program. The program provides competitive research funding for qualified small businesses developing products, processes and services for the diverse communities served by the USDA.

The objectives of the SBIR Program are to stimulate technological innovations in the private sector, strengthen the role of small businesses in meeting federal research and development needs, increase private sector commercialization of innovations derived from USDA-supported research and development efforts, and foster and encourage participation by women-owned and socially and economically disadvantaged small business firms in technological innovations.

Research topic categories of the SBIR program include: forests and related resources; plant production and protection; animal production and protection; air, water, and soils; food science and nutrition; rural and community development; aquaculture; industrial applications; marketing and trade; wildlife; and animal waste management.

The SBIR grant program is divided into two phases. Phase I grants support technical feasibility studies. Phase II grants provide financial assistance for Phase I projects to enter the development stage to the point of commercialization. Businesses are encouraged to pursue Phase III — commercialization — through other sources, as SBIR does not provide funding for expansion, marketing, and application of the developed technology.

The U.S. Small Business Administration's Office of Innovation, Research, and Technology (phone (202) 205-6450; Internet: www.sba.gov/sbir) oversees the SBIR program across the federal government. Other federal departments that have SBIR programs include the Department of Commerce ((301) 713-3565). The Department of Defense ((703) 588-8616), the Department of Education ((202) 245-7034), the Department of Energy ((301) 903-1414), the

Department of HHS (MH) ((301) 435-2688), the Department of Transportation ((617) 494-2712), the Environmental Protection Agency ((202) 343-9703), NASA ((301) 286-8888), and the National Science Foundation ((703) 292-7059.)

Project Examples

Phase I

- **Fresh peeled chestnuts:** In Carrollton, OH, the Empire Chestnut Company was awarded a \$50,000 grant to study a simple impact peeling process that will produce a value-added chestnut product—fresh peeled chestnuts. The present market volume of chestnuts is rather small and dominated by imported, in-shell chestnuts, which often reach the consumer in poor condition and are tedious to peel by hand. The objectives of the study were to improve chestnut preconditioning and the peeling device for maximum peeling with minimal kernel damage, and to develop handling methods to obtain at least a 2-week shelf life.
- **Snowmobile trail grooming:** Somero Enterprises, Inc., a small company in Houghton, MI, developed the idea of "Fostering Rural Economic Development Using New Concepts in Snowmobile Trail Grooming." The feasibility study of the same title was awarded a \$50,000 grant for an 18-month study. As recreation and tourism have become a major part of the economic stability in rural areas over the past decade, more and more businesses have looked into different kinds of trail grooming. Snowmobiling has become a major winter pastime with considerable income for local hotels, restaurants, markets and other establishments. A trail groomer that would enhance the physical properties of individual snow crystals, increase durability of the trail, decrease set-up time, and lengthen the snowmobiling season.

- **Advanced ceramics using rice husks:** Under the Industrial Applications heading, the SBIR program awarded \$50,000 to Nanomaterials Research Corporation in Tucson, AZ. The proposal was for developing a process to produce advanced ceramics cost effectively using agricultural raw products, such as rice husks. Potential commercial applications of advanced ceramics include: structural, mechanical, electrical, optical, catalytic, magnetic, sensor, etc. The company during Phase I will demonstrate the proof-of-concept.

Phase II

- **Cane-based syrup for small-scale limited resource farmers:** In Boligee, AL, Hall's Homemade Syrup was awarded an SBIR grant for \$190,000 over a 24-month period to develop syrup production. A major problem for rural communities in Alabama is finding a high-value crop and associated products that can be processed by the small, limited-resource farmers in the region. This research proposed refining the production of cane-based syrup and developing value-added products from the ribbon cane.
- **Grass forage cropping:** The G&G Hay and Black Ram Engineering companies of Princeton, ID, developed a research project to look into forage-based agriculture on the sloping, highly erodible terrain in northern Idaho. Phase I research showed that central Idaho can produce grass forage products that are competitive in regional and export markets. Commercial grass forage cropping has the potential to serve as an economic engine in a manner similar to other grass forage areas in central Washington, the Columbia River Basin, and west central Oregon. These areas have developed vibrant economies using commercial grass forage cropping as an alternative agricultural enterprise.

Information Available

The program solicitation, proposal preparation instructions, evaluation criteria, considerations, information sources, research topic descriptions, technical abstracts, and information on upcoming national conferences are available on SBIR's website.

Application and Financial Information

Phase I grants are for 6 months and will not exceed \$80,000. Phase II grants are for 24 months

and do not exceed \$300,000. Permission for extended studies may be granted.

Applications in the form of program solicitations are generally available and open in early June and close in early September. Pre-applications and proposals are not accepted, but advice may be sought from the national program office.

Eligibility, Uses and Restrictions

To be eligible for Phase I or Phase II grants, the principal investigator's employer must be a small business as defined under Section 2.2 of the Program Solicitation. Briefly, though, a small business must be independently owned, with at least 51 percent owned or for purposes of publicly owned businesses, 51 percent of its voting stock must be owned by United States citizens or lawfully admitted permanent resident aliens.

The business, which can be a small farm, cannot have more than 500 employees (full time, part-time, temporary, or other.) Recipients of SBIR Phase I grants are the only eligible contenders for an SBIR Phase II grant. Phase I grantees can apply for Phase II applications, but must have been awarded the grant within two years of applying for a Phase II grant.

For both Phase I and Phase II, the grantee must be considered a small business at the time of the grant award.

Contact

Application materials, known as the Program Solicitation, and further information are available on SBIR's website or by contacting the national program office.

Dr. Charles Cleland, National Program Leader
National Program Office
Phone: (202) 401-4002
E-mail: ccleland@csrees.usda.gov

Dr. William Goldner, National Program Leader
Phone: (202) 401-1719; Fax: (202) 401-6070
E-mail: wgoldner@csrees.usda.gov

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service
USDA, Ag. Box 2243
Washington, DC 20250-2243

Internet

<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/sbir/sbir.html>

Small Business Investment Companies (SBICs)

Providing equity capital, long-term loans, and management assistance

Congress created the Small Business Investment Company Program in 1958 to fill the gap between the availability of venture capital and the needs of small business in start-up and growth situations.

Licensed and regulated by the Small Business Administration (SBA), SBICs are privately owned and managed investment firms. They use their own funds, plus funds obtained by borrowing at favorable rates with an SBA guaranty and/or by selling their preferred stock to the SBA, to make venture-capital investments in small businesses.

Virtually all SBICs are profit-motivated businesses. They provide equity capital, long-term loans, debt-equity investments, and management assistance to qualifying small businesses. Their incentive is the chance to share in the success of the small business as it grows and prospers.

Most SBICs are owned by small groups of local investors. Many, however, are owned by commercial banks. Some SBICs are corporations with publicly traded stock; others are subsidiaries of corporations. The program makes funding available to all types of manufacturing, distribution, and service industries.

Many investment companies seek out small businesses with new products or services because of the strong growth potential of such firms. Some SBICs specialize in a particular field in which their management has special knowledge or competency. Most, however, consider a wide variety of investment opportunities.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

A business must meet the SBA's definition of "small" to be eligible for SBIC financing. In general, the SBA defines small businesses as companies whose net worth is \$18 million or less and whose average net (after-tax) income for the preceding 2 years does not exceed \$6 million.

For some industries, the above standards are too low, and alternate size standards are used. In determining whether a business qualifies, the SBA considers its parent, subsidiaries, and affiliates.

The SBA publishes a regularly updated directory of all current SBIC licenses as well as the amount of each SBIC's private capital and the amount of government leverage it has received. Information on each SBIC's type of ownership and investment policies is also available from the SBA by mail or over the Internet at <http://www.sba.gov/INV/>.

Contact

Check the telephone directory under "U.S. Government" for the nearest SBA office or call the Small Business Answer Desk (800) U-ASK-SBA. For the hearing impaired, the TDD number is (704) 344-6640.

Internet

www.sba.gov

SBIC Program:

<http://www.sba.gov/INV/forentre.html>

Small Business Loan Guaranty Program 7(a)

Providing guaranteed loans to small businesses unable to secure financing on reasonable terms through normal lending channels; operating through private-sector lenders that provide loans guaranteed by the SBA

Section 7(a) of the Small Business Act authorizes the Small Business Administration (SBA) to guarantee loans to small businesses that cannot obtain financing on reasonable terms through normal lending channels. The SBA basic guaranty program is designed to promote small business formation and growth by guaranteeing long-term loans to qualified firms. Loans are available for many business purposes, such as real estate, expansion, equipment, working capital or inventory.

The SBA can guarantee up to 85 percent of loans of \$150,000 and less, and up to 75 percent of loans above \$150,000 (generally up to a maximum guaranty amount of \$1 million). The maximum SBA loan size is \$2 million. The interest rate is not to exceed 2.75 percent over the prime lending rate, except under limited circumstances. Maturities are up to 10 years for working capital and up to 25 years for fixed assets.

Repayment ability from the cash flow of the business is a primary consideration in the SBA loan decision process. Good character, management capability, collateral, and owner's equity contribution are also important considerations. All owners of 20 percent or more equity are required to personally guarantee SBA loans.

The 7(a) Program is the largest of the SBA's financial assistance programs, handling more than 80 percent of all SBA business lending activity. In addition to general financing, the 7(a) program encompasses a number of the SBA's specialized loan programs:

- **Basic 7(a):** Guarantees long-term loans to small businesses that cannot obtain financing on reasonable terms through normal lending channels for uses such as real estate, expansion, equipment, working capital, or inventory.
- **LowDoc:** Designed to reduce the paperwork involved in loan requests of \$150,000 or less. The SBA uses a 1-page application

and relies on the strength of the individual applicant's character and credit history. The applicant must first satisfy all of the lender's requirements; then the lender may request a LowDoc guaranty.

- **SBAExpress:** SBAExpress encourages participating banks to use their own documentation and procedures to approve, service, and liquidate loans of up to \$250,000. In return, the SBA agrees to guarantee up to 50 percent of each loan. This is a pilot program with selected banks nationwide.
- **CAPLines:** Finances small business short-term, cyclical working-capital needs. There are five distinct short-term working capital loans: the Seasonal, Contract, Builder's, Standard Asset-Based, and Small Asset-Based lines. Most SBA regulations governing the 7(a) Program also govern this program. SBA generally can guarantee up to \$1 million.
- **International:** Offers long-term financing to small businesses working or preparing to work in international trade, as well as those businesses adversely affected by import competition.
- **Export:** Provides short-term working capital to exporters in a combined working effort of the SBA and the Export-Import Bank.
- **Prequalification Loans:** A pilot loan program enabling the SBA to prequalify a guaranty for loans of \$250,000 or less before the business owner goes to a bank. This program is designed for women, veterans, minorities, rural businesses, selected industries, and geographical areas.
- **7(m) Microloan:** Available in selected locations around the country, the MicroLoan program provides short-term loans of up to \$35,000. If you need a loan for small-scale financing purposes such as inventory, supplies and working capital (but not to pay existing debts), this program may be your

answer. MicroLoans are made through SBA-approved nonprofit groups, known as intermediaries, which also provide counseling and technical assistance. Call your local SBA office to locate the nearest SBA-designated group.

Project Examples

A policy of client confidentiality prevents SBA staff from providing examples of loan projects. You can obtain a free copy of "The Resource Directory for Small Business Management," a listing of publications and videotapes available for purchase, from your local SBA office or the SBA Answer Desk (see contact information in this entry).

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

The vast majority of businesses are eligible for financial assistance from the SBA. Applicant businesses must operate for profit; be engaged in, or propose to do business in the United States or its possessions; have reasonable owner equity to invest, and must have used alternative financial resources including personal assets.

Ineligible businesses are those that are engaged in illegal activities, loan packaging, speculation, multi-sales distribution, gambling, investment or lending, or where the owner is on parole. Also ineligible are the following types of businesses: real estate investment; speculative activities; academic schools; pyramid sales plans; illegal activities; charitable or religious activities; or nonprofit institutions.

The Small Business Act defines an eligible small business as one that is independently owned and operated and not dominant in its field of operation. This can vary from industry to industry. Size standards that define the maximum size of an eligible small business are as follows:

Industry	Size
Retail	\$6 million to \$24.5 million receipts
Construction	\$12 million to \$28.5 million receipts
Agriculture	\$750,000 - \$6 million receipts
Wholesale	No more than 100 employees
Manufacturing	500 to 1,500 employees
Service	\$6 million to \$30 million receipts

Size eligibility should be discussed with the local SBA office staff. Also note that the standards for a particular business may change from time to time and some exceptions do apply.

The proceeds of SBA loans can be used for most business purposes, including the purchase of real estate to house business operations; construction, renovation or leasehold improvements; acquisition of furniture, fixtures, machinery, and equipment; purchase of inventory; and working capital.

Loan proceeds may not be used to finance floor plan needs; purchase real estate where the participant has issued a forward commitment to the builder/developer or where the real estate will be held primarily for investment purposes; make payments to owners or pay delinquent withholding taxes; or pay existing debt unless it can be shown that the refinancing will benefit the small business and that the need to refinance is not indicative of imprudent management.

SBA loans can be used for most business purposes, including establishing a new business; purchasing inventory, furniture, fixtures, machinery, and equipment; buying land for construction; building; financing leasehold improvements; real property; and for use as working capital. In some cases, proceeds may be used for financing certain types of debt. Some restrictions and special circumstances exist.

Contact

Check the telephone directory under "U.S. Government" for the nearest SBA office or call the Small Business Answer Desk (800) U-ASK-SBA.

For the hearing impaired, the TDD number is (704) 344-6640.

Internet

www.sba.gov

7(a) Program:
<http://www.sba.gov/financing/index.html>

Small Farm Program USDA/CSREES

Meeting the needs of the small farm community

The goal of the CSREES program for small farms is to improve the income levels and economic viability of small farm enterprises in partnership with the land-grant university system and public and private sectors, by encouraging research, extension, and education programs that meet the needs of small farmers and ranchers.

Small farm programs are conducted to help small farm families better use community services, improve financial management, develop markets, assist in estate planning, emphasize on-farm research and demonstration, and prepare family members for employment opportunities.

Information Available

Small Farm Toll-free Number: 1-800-583-3071 — This toll-free number has been established by the USDA-CSREES to give small farmers much easier access and quicker response time to their questions or information inquiries on small farm issues. There is no cost involved with calling this hotline.

Electronic Mail Access: smallfarm@reeusda.gov — The Small Farm mailing group was established in 1995 under USDA-CSREES-Plant and Animal Systems. This medium is used to exchange small-farm-related information, to request ideas, share success stories, and provide notice of events, publications, and much more. Anyone with interests in small farms is welcome to subscribe. To subscribe to the small farm-mailing group, send a message to asimon@csrees.usda.gov. In the body, type subscribe small farm.

Newsletter — The Small Scale Agriculture Today newsletter has been merged with the Small and Part Time Farms' newsletter, to an entirely new stand-alone newsletter that will serve the readership needs of the land grant universities and public and private sectors, including the small farm communities nationwide. Call

toll free: (800) 583-3071 to subscribe to the Small Farm Digest or write to: Small Farm Digest, Stop 2215, USDA-CSREES, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington DC 20250.

Publications — These publications on "Getting Started in Farming" can be obtained upon request:

- Getting Started in Farming
- Mostly On Your Own
- Part-Time or Small Farms
- So You Have Inherited A Farm
- Via The Home Farm
- Small is Bountiful
- Getting Started in Farming On A Small Scale (USDA Publication)
- Overview of Small Farm Programs at the Land Grant Colleges and Universities
- Directory of State Extension Small Farm Contacts
- Small Farm Digest, a quarterly publication
- Proceedings of the National Small Farm Conference (1996)
- Getting Help for Your Small Farm from USDA
- Brochure on Small Farm Program

Fact sheets — Fact sheets have been developed on such topics as:

aquaculture	asparagus
beekeeping	blueberries
brambles	American ginseng
specialty corn	angora goats
cashmere goats	dairy and meat goats
specialty flowers	foliage plants
earthworm production	exotic fruits
herbs	exotic livestock
mushrooms	shiitake mushrooms
specialty mushrooms	northern nuts
organic farming	peppers
specialty potatoes	poultry
pumpkins	sheep
strawberries	specialty vegetables
wildflowers	wood lots

Small Farm Resource Guide – is a state-by-state guide to institutions, programs, and other resources useful to small farmers and those who serve them.

To obtain any of the listed items, write to the Small Farm Program, Stop 2215, USDA-CSREES, 800 9th Street SW, Washington DC 20024, or call (800) 583-3071.

Contact

Denis Ebodaghe
National Program Leader—Small Farms
USDA-CSREES, Stop 2220
1400 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20250-2220
Phone: (202) 401-4385; Fax: (202) 401-5179
E-mail: debodaghe@csrees.usda.gov

Internet

<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/smallfarms.html>

The Small Farm Digest newsletter is available for viewing or downloading on this site. Other available items are the Proceedings of the First National Small Farm Conference, Overview of Small Farm Programs at the Land-Grant Colleges and Universities, the CSREES and Land Grant System's National Plan for Small Farms, the Small Farm Resource Guide, a national listing of farmers' markets, and links to other useful sites.

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program

Providing grants to researchers, educators, and producers to improve the environmental and economic sustainability of farming and ranching

The Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program provides grants to advance farming systems that are profitable, environmentally sound, and good for communities. Specifically, the program awards grants to farms, universities, nonprofit organizations, and research/education institutions or agencies to improve the economic, environmental, and social sustainability of farming and ranching.

SARE also conducts educational and extension programs in an effort to increase knowledge about—and help farmers and ranchers adopt—sustainable farming practices.

SARE's four regional offices administer three primary grant programs, although some offer other opportunities for community innovation, and for graduate students and agricultural professionals conducting on-farm research.

Two of SARE's grant programs, Producer Grants and Research and Education Grants, may be used for on-farm research to explore diversification and marketing opportunities. SARE Professional Development Grants are used for a variety of professional development activities, ranging from conducting workshops to creating educational videos to hosting on-farm training sessions for extension workers and conservation professionals.

In addition, each region offers one or more programs that are unique to the region. Contact each region for more details.

Getting research results and helpful information to farmers in a timely, useful fashion is a high priority of the SARE program. SARE's national outreach arm, the Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN), promotes effective communication about sustainable agriculture through a variety of printed and electronic information tools.

Project Examples

SARE has funded more than 2,500 projects to explore and apply economically profitable, envi-

ronmentally sound, and socially supporting farming systems. Some examples are:

- A grant of \$4,935 was awarded for an organic tomato production and marketing manual. This producer project built upon a previous New Jersey Agriculture Department and NOFA New Jersey initiative that successfully developed uniform packaging systems and established a market for organic tomatoes.
- A producer was awarded \$1,304 to expand direct sales of sustainably produced beef in the Harrisburg, PA, area. Customers were also given the opportunity to visit the farm.
- Montana researchers seeking alternatives to manage two crop-damaging insects—the wheat stem sawfly and the alfalfa weevil—have successfully introduced managed sheep grazing to knock back pests. With a SARE grant, researchers found that grazing sheep on crop residues after fall harvest disrupts the insects' lifestyles. Adding sheep brings multiple benefits to crop producers. By suppressing insects, sheep save farmers the costs of control measures such as burning, tillage, and insecticides. Sheep also crimp weed populations, which reduces costly tillage or herbicides during fallow management. Finally, sheep feed on low-cost crop residues and do their work without compacting the soil.
- With a SARE professional development grant, a Nevada educator oversaw development of a wide-reaching curriculum for agricultural educators focusing on growing plants and animals on small properties in environmentally sensitive areas. The curriculum, dubbed "Living on the Land: Teaching Small Acreage Owners to Conserve Their Natural Resources" (co-developed with extension educators in California, Colorado, Utah, Oregon,

Washington, Idaho, and Montana), covers the basics of goal-setting, soils, water, vegetation, and animals. It also answers such questions as how to maintain healthy pastures and protect household drinking water.

Information Available

SARE, through SAN, publishes handbooks, free bulletins and CD-ROMs. Information about SAN and SARE publications is available at www.sare.org or through any SARE office. Call (802) 656-0484 to order SAN publications, such as the following:

- **Building a Sustainable Business: A Guide to Developing a Business Plan for Farms and Rural Businesses.** This 280-page manual brings the business planning process alive to help alternative and sustainable agriculture entrepreneurs transform farm-grown inspiration into profitable enterprises. The step-by-step strategies help you to develop a detailed, lender-ready business plan or map out ways to take advantage of new opportunities. Developed by the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture in cooperation with SAN. \$14 plus S/H from MISA, (800) 909-MISA or misamail@umn.edu
- **Building Soils for Better Crops, 2nd edition.** \$19.95 This book for farmers, extension educators and soil science students unlocks the secret of maintaining a diverse ecosystem below ground to foster healthy crops above. The 240-page handbook contains detailed information about soil structure and the management practices that affect soils — as well as practical information such as how to interpret soil test results.
- **Managing Cover Crops Profitably, 2nd edition.** \$19. A practical handbook that helps remove the guesswork for farmers considering cover crops. Explores how and why cover crops work and provides all the information needed to build covers into any farming operation.
- **Steel in the Field: A farmer's guide to weed management tools.** \$18. This farmer-oriented book speaks to experienced or novice crop producers in any part of the country. More than 45 drawings accent technical descriptions on the role, design, and cost of tools.
- **The New Farmer's Market: Farm-Fresh Ideas for Producers, Managers and Communities.** \$24.95. In one complete volume, this must-have resource for direct market producers covers the latest tips and trends from leading-edge sellers, managers and market planners all over the country. Learn about the "hottest" products to grow and sell as well as how best to display and merchandise your products, set prices and run a friendly, profitable business. The second half of the book, written for market managers and city planners, offers ideas about how to use farmers markets as a springboard to foster community support for sustainable and locally grown foods.
- **How to Manage the Blue Orchard Bee as an Orchard Pollinator.** \$9.95. This 96-page manual offers a comprehensive look at how to rear blue orchard bees, which have become established as alternative orchard pollinators in North America, in part to address shortages in the number of honey bees. With a strong preference for fruit trees, blue orchard bees are highly efficient pollinators that are easy to manage and rarely sting.
- **The New American Farmer.** Book (\$10), CD-ROM (\$5), or browse or download free at www.sare.org. This publication collects in-depth interviews with farmers and ranchers to describe sustainable farm operations around the country. In addition to describing successful farming practices, the features in *The New American Farmer* detail the effects of those practices on farm profitability, quality of life, rural communities and the environment.

Free information bulletins for producers and agricultural professionals are available at www.sare.org or call (301) 504-5236. Topics include:

- **'Naturalize' Your Farming System: A Whole-Farm Approach to Managing Pests.** This 20-page bulletin helps producers — and the educators who work with them — design farm-wide approaches to control pests.
- **Reap New Profits: Marketing Strategies for Farmers and Ranchers.** This 20-page bulletin offers snapshots of the many alternatives to

marketing commodities through conventional channels.

- **Put Your Ideas to the Test: How to Conduct Research on Your Farm or Ranch.** This 12-page bulletin for farmers, ranchers, and the extension educators who work with them outlines how to conduct research at the farm level. The bulletin offers practical tips for both crop and livestock producers.
- **Profitable Poultry: Raising Birds on Pasture.** This bulletin features farmer experiences plus the latest research in a new "how-to" guide to raising chickens and turkeys using pens, movable fencing, and pastures.
- **Profitable Pork: Alternative Strategies for Hog Producers.** This 16-page bulletin showcases examples of alternate ways to raise pork profitably, for farmers who want to successfully produce pork on a small scale and can preserve their independence in the face of the consolidating hog industry.
- **Meeting the Diverse Needs of Limited-Resource Producers.** This 16-page bulletin is a resource for agricultural educators, heads of community development and agricultural organizations, government agency staff, and others who want to better connect with and improve the lives of farmers and ranchers who remain hard to reach.
- **Diversifying Cropping Systems.** This 20-page bulletin helps farmers design diverse rotations, choose new crops, and manage them successfully. The bulletin includes sidebars about five successful diverse farmers, sections on agroforestry and the environment, and a list of additional resources.
- **Opportunities in Agriculture: Transitioning to Organic Production.** This 32-page bulletin lays out many promising conversion strategies, covering typical organic farming production practices, innovative marketing ideas and federal standards for certified organic crop production. The bulletin includes special sections on livestock production and profiles of four organic producers.

Application and Financial Information

SARE's four regional offices administer three grant programs. All grant programs have only one application period per year; each grant has its own application, deadline, and focus.

Each region solicits proposals and awards grants. Some regions also offer grants for graduate student research, on-farm research led by agriculture professionals, agriculture-related community development, or other special topics. Check with your region for details. The primary grant programs are:

- **SARE Research and Education Grants:** Since 1988, four regional administrative councils have awarded competitive grants for sustainable agriculture research and education. Generally ranging from \$30,000 to \$200,000, they fund projects that usually involve scientists, producers, and others in an interdisciplinary approach. Many funded projects involve on-farm research trials with crops and/or livestock; other projects have studied quality of life, agricultural marketing, integrated farming systems, and soil and water conservation. Successful proposals typically include economic analysis and outreach components. The program also funds education and demonstration projects, including the development of farmer-to-farmer networks. Producers can team up with one or more technical experts (such as a university researcher) to apply for this grant. Typically about \$2 million is available for each region.
- **SARE Producer Grants:** Producers wanting to test an idea should consider this grant program for a research or education project. Many producer projects involve on-farm trials with crops or livestock, but some have focused on marketing or educational activities. Producers are expected to partner with an extension professional or other agricultural adviser and include a strategy for sharing their results with others. Usually, \$150,000 to \$200,000 is available for each region.
- **SARE Professional Development Grants:** To spread the knowledge about sustainable concepts and practices gained from SARE projects, Congress began appropriating funds for professional development for Cooperative Extension Service (CES) staff and other agriculture professionals in 1994. To date, funds have been used for competitive grants and state-specific funding. SARE professional development grants are used

for a variety of approaches, ranging from conducting workshops to creating educational videos to hosting on-farm training sessions for extension workers. Successful proposals have ranged from \$10,000 to \$100,000 and from single state to multi-state projects. Proposals that involve both extension personnel and producers are preferred, and partnerships of nonprofit organizations with extension and/or Natural Resource Conservation Service staff are welcome. Professional development activities are intended to be "train-the-trainer" programs, with a primary emphasis on CES staff, but they also provide opportunities for NRCS and other field agency staff.

Typically, \$300,000 to \$400,000 is available for each region for grants.

Check SARE's regional offices for information on other grant opportunities. See information for SARE's regional contacts in this entry.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Universities, nonprofit organizations, government agency staff, and agricultural producers are eligible for SARE grants.

The uses and restrictions vary from region to region and from year to year, depending on the specific call for proposals for a given year. Call the regional office for details on the call for proposals.

Contact

Proposal guidelines for each of the grants programs are available from the regional SARE offices or the national program office. Each region solicits proposals and awards grants independently; contact the regional office for applications and deadlines.

North Central Region
13-A Activities Building, P.O. Box 830840
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Lincoln, NE 68583-0840
Phone: (402) 472-7081
E-mail: ncrsare@unl.edu

Northeast Region
University of Vermont
Hills Building
Burlington, VT 05405-0082
Phone: (802) 656-0471
E-mail: nesare@uvm.edu

Southern Region
University of Georgia
Ag Experiment Station
1109 Experiment Street
Griffin, GA 30223-1797
Phone: (770) 412-4787
E-mail: sare@griffin.uga.edu

Western Region
Utah State University
Ag Science Bldg., Rm. 305
4865 Old Main Hill Road
Logan, UT 84322-4865
Phone: (801) 797-2257
E-mail: wsare@mendel.usu.edu

National Program Office
Director, Sustainable Agriculture Programs
1400 Independence Ave. SW
USDA Mail Stop 2223
Washington, DC 20250-2223
Phone: (202) 720-6527; Fax: (202) 720-6071
E-mail: ehahn@csrees.usda.gov

Internet

www.sare.org

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Firms (TAA)

Providing financial assistance to manufacturers affected by import competition

Subtitled "Management and Mentoring Assistance for Small Businesses" and sponsored by the U.S. Department of Commerce, this cost-sharing federal assistance program pays for half the cost of consultants or industry-specific experts for projects that improve a manufacturer's competitiveness. Import-impacted manufacturers can receive matching funds for projects that strengthen operations and sharpen competitiveness.

A network of 12 regional, nonprofit organizations manages the TAA program. Known as Trade Adjustment Assistance Centers (TAACs), their staffs consist of experienced business professionals who have worked with thousands of manufacturers since the program's inception in 1974.

The staff works to simplify a firm's participation in the program by preparing the application and guiding a firm through each phase of the program. Staff members also make presentations to trade associations, economic development groups, consulting firms, banks, and other groups that work closely with manufacturers, for the purpose of having these groups better understand this unique federal assistance program.

Project Examples

Success Story #1

Situation: A small food flavorings company was losing sales and jobs to large international rivals.

Solution: TAA funds were used to develop new line of specialty flavorings and implement comprehensive management information system for enhanced customer service.

Success: Sales and employment nearly tripled

in 4 years.

Success Story #2

Situation: A baseball cap manufacturer was being undercut by low cost imports in commodity products.

Solution: TAA funds were used to develop "nostalgia" line of vintage baseball caps.

Success: Record year in sales.

Success Story #3

Situation: A backpack manufacturer struggled to survive as one of the few remaining outerwear firms in the area.

Solution: TAA funds were used to implement marketing campaign for its new single-strap backpack.

Success: Doubled account base in 1 year.

Application and Financial Information

TAA is a proven, easy-to-use program managed by business professionals who understand manufacturing. It focuses on providing financial assistance to import-impacted manufacturers.

TAA offers:

- 50/50 cost sharing
- Minimal investment and maximum results
- Leverage resources
- Cash flow advantages

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

Manufacturers in a variety of industries have benefited from the matching funds available through the Trade Adjustment Assistance for Firms (TAA) program. TAA provides substantial financial assistance to offset the cost of projects that strengthen operations and sharpen competitiveness for manufacturers in many industries.

This customized business assistance is used for a variety of projects, including marketing, information technology, manufacturing, engineering, and quality.

Contact

Great Lakes TAAC
University of Michigan Business School
Business and Industrial Assistance Division
506 East Liberty St., 3rd Floor, Carver Building
Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2210
Toll free: (877) 877-5439
Phone: (734) 998-6213; Fax: (734) 998-6224
E-mail: gltaac@umich.edu
URL: <http://www.gltaac.org>
Areas served: IN, MI, OH

Mid-America TAAC
664 SE Bayberry Lane, Suite 101
Lee's Summit, MO 64063
Toll free: (800) 551-8222
Phone: (816) 246-1555; Fax: (816) 246-9860
E-mail: mid-amer@taacenter.org
Areas served: AR, KS, MO

Mid-Atlantic TAAC
1730 Walton Road, Suite 204
Blue Bell, PA 19422
Toll free: (800) 566-7522
Phone: (610) 825-7819; Fax: (610) 825-7708
E-mail: general@mataac.org
Areas served: DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, WV

Midwest TAAC
Applied Strategies International, Ltd.
150 North Wacker Drive, Suite 2240
Chicago, IL 60606
Toll free: (800) 333-2148
Phone: (312) 368-4600; Fax: (312) 368-9043
E-mail: info@appliedstrategiesintl.com
Areas served: IL, IA, MN, WS

New England TAAC
600 Suffolk Street
Fifth Floor North
Lowell, MA 01854
Phone: (978) 446-9870; Fax: (978) 446-9820
E-mail: info@netaac.org
Areas served: CT, ME, MA, NH, RH, VT

New Jersey TAAC
P.O. Box 990
Trenton, NJ 08625-0990
Phone: (609) 292-0360; Fax: (609) 984-4301
E-mail: taac@njeda.com
URL: <http://www.njeda.com/taac.asp>
Area served: NJ

New York State TAAC
117 Hawley Street, Suite 102
Binghamton, NY 13901-3989
Phone: (607) 771-0875; Fax: (607) 724-2404
E-mail: gyouman@binghamton.edu
URL: <http://www.nystaac.org>
Area served: NY

Northwest TAAC
1200 Westlake Avenue North, Suite 802
Seattle, WA 98109
Toll Free: (800) 667-8087
Phone: (206) 622-2730; Fax: (206) 622-1105
E-mail: admin@nwtaac.org
Areas served: AK, ID, OR, MT, WA

Rocky Mountain TAAC
5353 Manhattan Circle, Suite 200
Boulder, CO 80303
Toll Free: (800) 677-3791
Phone: (303) 499-8222; Fax: (303) 499-8298
E-mail: edvardh@aol.com
Areas served: CO, NE, NM, ND, SD, UT, WY

Southeastern TAAC
760 Spring Street, NW
Atlanta, GA 30308
Phone: (404) 894-3858; Fax: (404) 894-8194
E-mail: setaac@edi.gatech.edu
URL: <http://www.industry.gatech.edu/setaac>
Areas served: AL, FL, GA, KT, MS, NC, SC, TN

Southwest TAAC
501 W. Durango
San Antonio, TX 78207
Toll Free: (800) 344-8872
Phone: (210) 458-2490; Fax: (210) 458-2491
E-mail: swtaac@utsa.edu
URL: <http://www.swtaac.org>
Areas served: LA, OK, TX

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3716 South Hope Street, Suite 200
Los Angeles, CA 90007
Phone: (213) 743-2732; Fax: (213) 746-8722
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URL: <http://www.usc.edu/org/wtaac/>
Areas served: AZ, CA, HI, NV

Internet

<http://www.taacenters.org/>

Value-Added Producer Grants

Helping farm producers move into value-added agricultural enterprises

Formerly known as the Value-Added Development Grants Program, the Value-Added Producer Grant Program (VAPG) is a competitive grants program administered by the Rural Business-Cooperative Service at USDA. The program was authorized in the 2002 Farm Bill to receive mandatory funding for up to \$40 million annually through 2007. In recent years, Congress has chosen to reduce this amount; VAPG is funded at \$15 million in FY 2004, for example.

The definition of a value-added product includes:

- A change in the physical form of the product, such as milling wheat into flour or strawberries into jam
- Producing a product in a way that enhances its value, such as "organic," "free-range," "grass-fed," etc.
- Physically segregating an agricultural commodity or product in a manner that results in the enhancement of the value of the agricultural product, such as the identity preserved marketing systems.

The definition of value-added product includes any agricultural product or commodity used to produce renewable energy on a farm or ranch.

Project Examples

- A grant of \$64,500 was awarded to the Arizona Pistachio Association to conduct a feasibility study and prepare a business plan to develop a processing facility and direct marketing strategy for Arizona's pistachio production.
- The California Wild Rice Growers Association was awarded \$130,000 for working capital to develop, package, evaluate, and market soy-enhanced wild rice snack chips.
- Three farmers in Fort Pierce, FL, were awarded \$15,000 to expand the marketing of their "certified organic" products.
- \$149,000 was granted to Ag Ventures Alliance Cooperative in Iowa to study the

feasibility of an aquaculture business that will add value to the grain produced by its farmer owners.

- A grant of \$108,000 was awarded to Maine Sustainable Agriculture Society for working capital for the operational costs of linking central Maine institutions with local agricultural producers to tap the emerging market for locally grown, organic and conventional foods.
- \$249,830 was granted to Chesapeake Fields Farmers in Maryland to complete a feasibility study and business plan for a value-added venture to process small grains and eventually operate a bakery.
- The United Cooperative Farmers in Massachusetts was awarded \$50,000 to complete a feasibility study and marketing and business plan to create a new, fully traceable, dedicated organic feed manufacturing venture.
- \$75,605 was awarded to the Midwest Nut Producers Council in Michigan to assess the feasibility of marketing products produced from small and broken peeled chestnuts.
- Harvest Land Cooperative in Minnesota was granted \$148,000 to assist in the development of on-farm renewable energy generation using wind.
- A grant of \$323,837 was given to Amazing Grains Cooperative in Montana for working capital to expand processing capacity and markets for a value-added gluten-free Indian ricegrass product.
- Dakota Renewable Fuels in North Dakota was awarded \$167,500 to complete a business plan, complete offering documents, conduct an equity drive and complete other activities needed to develop a 30-million gallon dry-mill ethanol plant.

Application and Financial Information

The most recent information on funding availability and applications is available through each state's USDA Rural Development Office. A list of every state office is printed at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/vadgstateoffice.html>.

When applying for a grant, applicants must choose between two different types of activities for funding:

- Developing feasibility studies or business plans, which include marketing plans
- Working capital to operate a value-added business or alliance.

Applicants are eligible to apply for only one of these two types of grants each grant cycle

The maximum grant award is \$500,000, but smaller grants have priority.

The request for proposal (RFP) includes a list of evaluation criteria that are used to score applications for strength and merit. Reviewers award points to each application based on how well the applicant has addressed the requirements spelled out in the evaluation criteria. The program requires a one-to-one match. A cash match is defined as actual funds dedicated to the project. An in-kind match includes time, equipment, space, staff salaries, etc.

Applicants are advised to contact their State USDA Rural Development Office to discuss a proposed project and ask for information about the VAPG program. Completed applications are submitted to that state USDA office for review. Prospective applicants should also be in touch with the marketing divisions of their state Departments of Agriculture, many of which offer workshops on how best to apply for the program. Such workshops can provide information, applications, and guidance on when and how to apply for a grant.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

If you are a farmer, a farmer or rancher cooperative, agricultural producer group, or a majority-controlled producer-based business venture, you are eligible to apply for a value-added grant. The RFP will provide definitions for all of these entities.

VAPG grant funds can be used to conduct feasibility analyses, develop business plans or business marketing plans; obtain legal advice or accounting services; pay salaries, utilities or other operating costs; purchase office equipment, computers, or other supplies; or finance other related activities needed to set up the proposed business venture.

Funds cannot be used to plan, design, rehabilitate, acquire, or construct a building or facility; buy, rent, or install fixed equipment, including mobile and other processing equipment; pay for preparation of the grant application; pay expenses not directly related to the venture; undertake political or lobbying activities; reimburse costs incurred before the grant; or for expenses related to production of the commodity to which value will be added.

Contact

Gail Thuner

Phone: (202) 690-2426

Marc Warman

Phone: (202) 690-1431

Information about applying for a VAPG is available at each state's USDA Rural Development Office. A list of contacts by state is at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/vadgstateoffice.htm>.

Internet

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/vadg.htm>

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

Restoring and protecting wetlands on private property, and providing financial incentives to enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring agricultural land

The WRP helps farmers and other landowners take agricultural lands out of production and restore them as wetlands. The program is administered by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) with assistance from the State Technical Committees. The NRCS provides technical information about restoring wetlands and financial assistance for conservation measures.

There are three enrollment options: a permanent easement, a 30-year easement, or a restoration agreement. Under all three options, the landowner retains ownership of the land; remains responsible for taxes; controls access; reserves the right to hunt, fish, trap, and pursue other appropriate recreational uses; and may sell or lease land enrolled in WRP. Other uses may be permitted providing NRCS determines the use is compatible with the restoration and protection of the wetland.

If the NRCS approves your offer for a:

- Permanent easement, the government will provide an easement payment based on the lesser of the appraised value of the land, a geographic rate cap, or an amount offered by the landowner. The government will pay 100 percent of the restoration costs and the administrative costs associated with filing the easement (survey costs, legal fees, recording fees, etc.).
- 30-year easement, the government will provide an easement payment that is 75 percent of the amount that would have been made for a permanent easement, up to 75 percent of the restoration costs and all of the administrative costs associated with filing the easement.
- 10-year restoration agreement, the government will provide up to 75 percent of the restoration costs.

Project Examples

Examples of situations appropriate for the WRP include:

- On the Mississippi delta floodplain in Louisiana, one farmer cultivated rice in a zone of ridge and swale topography with heavy clay soil. The drainage to the Mississippi river had been blocked and water often backed up, flooding the field, resulting in no harvest or the inability to even plant during some wet years. The WRP agreement was to restore the hydrology of 640 acres by installing small dikes and outlets at the swales creating shallow water areas. Planting of bottom land hardwoods along the ridges further improved the land for wildlife habitat. A permanent easement paid the farmer a one-time fee of \$500/acre, covered 100 percent of the restoration costs, and still enabled him to hold title to the land. The farmer now rents out duck blinds to hunters for \$2,000 to 4,000 each season.
- In the previous example, if the landowner chose a 30-year easement, the same deed arrangement would be made, but just for the 30 years rather than as a permanent easement. WRP would have paid 75 percent of the restoration costs and 75 percent of the agricultural value of the land to the landowner.
- A dairy farmer in northern New England had continuous problems with a 30-acre hayfield within the floodplain of an adjacent river. Despite extensive ditching and other attempts to remove the water, some years the land was too wet to plow. The farmer opted for a permanent easement in the WRP to restore the 30 acres to wetland. He received a one-time payment of \$500/acre, the costs of ditch plugging were

reimbursed, and he now has the multiple benefits of a one-acre shallow pond, which attracts migratory waterfowl and other wildlife to his property.

Application and Financial Information

To participate in the WRP, visit your local NRCS office, sign an "intent to participate," and select one of the three contract options. (See "Overview" in this entry).

Landowners work with NRCS personnel to draw up a preliminary plan or Wetland Restoration Plan of Operations (WRPO), which describes the types of practices to be established, a timetable for establishing practices, and the estimated costs of restoration.

The amount of taxes to be paid on the easement area is determined by the local taxing authority; the NRCS has no authority regarding property or other tax issues. You should seek this information before entering the WRP.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

To be eligible for the program, a landowner must have a clear title and own the land for at least 12 months before the end of the sign-up period (except in the case of inheritance). The land must be restorable to wetland conditions.

Eligible lands include wetlands farmed under natural conditions, farmed wetlands, prior con-

verted cropland, commenced converted wetlands, farmed wetland pasture, or land substantially altered by flooding. Your local NRCS office can help you decide if your land is eligible.

The landowner continues to control access to the land — and may lease the land — for hunting, fishing, and other undeveloped recreational activities. At any time, a landowner may request additional activities be evaluated to determine if they are compatible uses for the site. This request may include such items as permission to cut hay, graze livestock or harvest wood products. Compatible uses are allowed if they are fully consistent with the protection and enhancement of the wetland.

Contact

For more information on restoring wetlands, contact a local USDA Service Center, Cooperative Extension, or the soil and water conservation district office.

Leslie Deavers
National Program Office
6017 South Building
Washington, DC
Phone: (202) 720-1067; Fax: (202) 690-1462

Internet

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/wrp/>

WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)

Providing a direct link between nutrition and the nation's small-resource farmers by providing women, infants and children with the opportunity to buy and consume fresh, local fruits, vegetables, and herbs directly from farmers, farmers' markets, and roadside stands

The FMNP is associated with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, popularly known as WIC, that provides supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education at no cost to low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to 5 years of age, who are found to be at nutritional risk.

The FMNP was established by Congress in July 1992, to provide fresh, nutritious, unprepared, locally grown fruits and vegetables from farmers' markets to WIC participants, and to expand the awareness, use of, and sales at farmers' markets. It is administered through a federal/state partnership in which the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) provides cash grants to state agencies. The FMNP is currently administered by 44 State agencies such as state agriculture departments or health departments or Indian Tribal Organizations.

Eligible WIC participants are issued FMNP coupons in addition to their regular WIC food instruments. These coupons are used to buy fresh, unprepared locally grown fruits, vegetables and herbs from farmers or farmers' markets that have been approved by the state agency to accept FMNP coupons. The federal food benefit level for FMNP recipients may not be less than \$10 and no more than \$20 per year, per recipient. However, state agencies may supplement the benefit level with state funds. Farmers or farmers' markets authorized to accept FMNP coupons submit the coupons for reimbursement.

Nutrition education is provided to FMNP recipients by the state agency. This information encourages FMNP recipients to improve and expand their diets by adding fresh fruits and

vegetables, as well as educates them on how to select, store, and prepare the fresh fruits and vegetables they buy with their FMNP coupons.

Project Examples

- Federal funds appropriated for the FMNP have increased from \$20 million in FY 2001 to \$25 million in 2003.
- Increased funding for the FMNP has resulted in three new state agencies operating the program, and a number of state agencies expanding program operations to serve more eligible WIC participants. In FY 2003, over \$3.3 million was provided to state agencies for the expansion of current programs.
- The FMNP benefits both recipients and farmers. In FY 2002, the program served just over 2.1 million WIC participants. In addition, FMNP recipients purchased over \$20.8 million worth of fresh produce from over 13,000 farmers at just over 2,800 market outlets authorized to accept FMNP coupons.
- Partnerships play an important role in the success of the FMNP. State agencies bring together health and agriculture agencies, nutrition education organizations, community organizations, farmers, nonprofit entities and advocacy groups, as active partners in supporting program participants and the local farm economy, which in turn improves the health of WIC participants.

Application and Financial Information

Grants for administering the program are made to state health, agriculture, and other agencies (or Indian tribes, bands, or intertribal

councils or groups recognized by the Department of the Interior). Participating state agencies must initiate the process by applying for participation in the program.

Federal funds support 70 percent of the total cost of the program. States operating the FMNP must match the federal funds allocated to them by contributing at least 30 percent of the total cost of the program. Indian state agencies may receive a lower match, but not less than 10 percent of the total cost of the program. The matching funds can come from a variety of sources, such as state and local funds, private funds, similar programs, and program income.

For fiscal year 2003, Congress provided a total of \$25 million for the FMNP.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

As a prerequisite to receiving federal funds for the FMNP, each applying or participating state agency must submit a state plan describing the manner in which the state agency intends to implement, operate, and administer all aspects of the FMNP within its jurisdiction.

New state agencies are selected based on evaluation criteria and the availability of funds.

Local FMNP sites are selected by participating state agencies based on concentration of eligible WIC participants and access to farmers' markets.

Women, infants (over 4 months old), and children that are certified to receive WIC Program benefits or who are on a waiting list for WIC certification are eligible to participate in the FMNP. State agencies may serve some or all of these categories.

Each state agency is responsible for authorizing individual farmers, farmers' markets, or both. Only farmers and/or farmers' markets authorized by the state agency may accept and redeem FMNP coupons. Individuals who exclusively sell produce grown by someone else, such as wholesale distributors, cannot be authorized to participate in the FMNP.

Contact

Robert C. Mulvey, Regional Director

Regional Contacts

Northeast Region

Phone: (617) 565-6440

Patricia A. Cumiskey-Czeto, Regional Director

Mid-Atlantic Region

Phone: (609) 259-5100

Jane Monahan, Regional Director

Southeast Region

Phone: (404) 562-7100

Sandra Slayton, Regional Director

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Phone: (312) 886-6625

Sondra Ralph, Regional Director

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Phone: (214) 290-9812

Ralph Anzur, Regional Director

Mountain Plains Region

Phone: (303) 844-0331

Cordelia Fox, Regional Director

Western Region

Phone: (415) 705-1313

Headquarters

Patricia N. Daniels, Director

Supplemental Food Programs Division

Food and Nutrition Service

U.S. Department of Agriculture

3101 Park Center Drive, Room 520

Alexandria, VA 22302-1500

Phone: (703) 305-2746; Fax: (703) 305-2196

Internet

For more information, please visit our website at:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/FMNP/FMNPfaqs.htm>

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

Offering cost-sharing and technical assistance to improve wildlife habitat

The Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) is designed to help landowners and those who are in control of acreage develop and preserve important wildlife habitat for future generations. The program offers technical assistance and cost-sharing opportunities for establishing a wildlife habitat development plan and for managing the land in accordance with that plan.

The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) works with state and local partners to establish wildlife habitat priorities in each state. NRCS will provide cost-share payments up to 75 percent of the cost of installing wildlife habitat development practices on the land. Agreements are generally for a 5- to 10-year period. WHIP also provides long-term 15-year agreements where NRCS will provide up to 100 percent of the cost for implementing practices that benefit rare habitats.

Project Examples

Each state has established several wildlife priorities, including one or more upland and riparian habitats. Nationally, acres have been distributed among four major habitat types:

- **Upland Wildlife Habitat**—Several types of early successional grasslands, such as tall grass prairies, have declined more than 98 percent, according to a 1995 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Report. One of the primary focuses of WHIP nationally is restoration of some of these now scarce areas. Wildlife dependent on native grasslands includes neotropical migratory birds, waterfowl, amphibians, reptiles, and many mammals. Other upland priorities include the establishment of windbreaks and edge around croplands, forests including pine barrens and long leaf pine, wildlife corridors, and shrub scrub steppe habitat. Practices installed on upland habitat include various types of seeding and plantings, fencing, livestock management, prescribed burning, and shrub thickets with shelterbelts.
- **Wetland Wildlife Habitat**—WHIP wetlands include acreage not eligible for the NRCS Wetland Reserve Program cost-share agreements, such as winter flooding of crop fields for waterfowl. Other wetland types that will be enhanced include tidal flushing areas, salt marshes, wetland hardwood hammocks, mangrove forests, and wild rice beds. Created wetlands include freshwater marshes and vernal pools in abandoned gravel mines. Practices to enhance or create wetland wildlife habitat include installation of culverts or water control structures, invasive plant control, fencing, creation of green tree reservoirs, moist soil unit management, and creation of shallow water areas.
- **Riparian and Inset Aquatic Wildlife Habitat**—This category includes riparian areas along streams, rivers, lakes, sloughs, and coastal areas, as well as the streams, lakes, and rivers themselves. Practices to improve aquatic and riparian wildlife habitat include tree plantings, fencing with livestock management and off-stream watering, in-stream structures, seeding, stream bank protection and stabilization, stream deflectors, creation of small pools, installation of buffers, removal of dams, fencing, creation of fish passages past structures, alternative watering facilities, and establishment of instream structures such as logs or rocks.
- **Threatened and Endangered Species**—Threatened and endangered species targeted through WHIP include, but are not limited to the following: American burying beetle, Neosho madtom, Topeka shiner, gray bat, kit fox, bog turtle, gopher tortoise, dusky-gopher frog, Eastern indigo snake, Southern hognose snake, black pine snake, Louisiana black bear, red-cockaded woodpecker, Mississippi sandhill crane, Florida panther, wood stork, snail kite, Florida sandhill crane, caracara, grasshopper sparrow, Snake River chinook salmon, Umpqua River cutthroat trout, coho salmon, steelhead, bulltrout, Lahontan cutthroat trout,

Yuma clapper rails, Sonoran pronghorn, Mexican voles, and lesser long-nosed bats.

Application and Financial Information

WHIP applications will be accepted at local USDA Service Centers or conservation district offices. They may also be accepted by cooperating conservation partners approved or designated by NRCS.

Participants work with NRCS to prepare a wildlife habitat development plan in consultation with the local conservation district. The agreement describes the landowner's goals for improving wildlife habitat, includes a list of practices and schedule for installing them, and details the steps necessary to maintain the habitat for the life of the agreement.

The NRCS and the participant enter into a cost-share agreement for wildlife habitat development. This agreement generally lasts 5 to 10 years from the date the contract is signed. Under the agreement:

- The landowner agrees to maintain the cost-shared practices and allow the NRCS or its agent access to monitor its effectiveness.
- The NRCS agrees to provide technical assistance and pay up to 75 percent of the cost of installing the wildlife habitat practices. Additional financial or technical assistance may be available through cooperating partners.

Applications will be ranked according to a state-developed plan, and those that provide the greatest wildlife benefits will be funded. The goal is to provide the best habitat possible for the species of fish and wildlife that the landowner or land steward is trying to protect. Cost-share payments may be used to establish, maintain, or replace practices.

The budget for WHIP is authorized at a total of \$360 million from 2002-2007. Funds are allocated to states based on wildlife conservation priorities which will vary by state, and may include special pilot programs for wildlife habitat development, targeted species and their habitats, specific practices, and cooperative agreements with other federal, state, or local agencies, conservation districts, or private conservation groups.

Eligibility, Uses, and Restrictions

To participate in WHIP, applicants must own or have control of the land under consideration. Applications may be accepted from individuals, groups, or businesses.

Land is not eligible for WHIP if it is currently: federal land (though exceptions can apply); land enrolled in Waterbank, Emergency Watershed Program floodplain easements, Conservation Reserve Program, Wetlands Reserve Program, or other similar programs; or land where the expected impact from off-site conditions make the success of habitat improvement unlikely.

WHIP funds cannot be used for mitigation of any kind. Such land can be included in a WHIP cost-share agreement, however cost-share funds cannot be expended on those acres.

Applicants create a wildlife habitat development plan for the land with assistance from the USDA or an approved certified technical service provider. Participants are encouraged to select native plants and native plant communities because these are well adapted to the area, less invasive, and likely to provide quality habitat without costly maintenance expenses.

WHIP funds are to be directed to support state wildlife habitat priorities which may include wildlife habitat areas; targeted species and their habitats; specific practices; and cooperative agreements with other federal, state, or local agencies, conservation districts, or private conservation groups. State priorities are developed in consultation with the State Technical Committee.

Contact

For more information, contact the NRCS through your local USDA Service Center, or your local conservation district office.

Martha Joseph, National Program Manager
National Program Office
Watersheds and Wetlands Division
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Phone: (202) 720-3534; Fax: (202) 720-2143

Internet

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/whip>

Wildlife Services (WS)

Responding to requests by the public and agencies needing help in limiting wildlife damage

Wild animals contribute to our enjoyment of nature and outdoor recreation, but they can also damage property, agriculture, and natural resources, and threaten human health and safety. A USDA program that shares costs with cooperators, WS has the authority to assist in solving problems that are created when wildlife cause damage.

Most of WS's efforts are conducted on private land in response to specific requests for assistance. After developing agreements with governmental and private-sector cooperators, WS provides help to prevent or reduce wildlife damage through two approaches: technical assistance and direct control.

WS acts as a protective buffer, guarding not only resources, but also wildlife and the environment when conflicts between humans and wildlife occur. When formulating control strategies, WS specialists consider protected or endangered animals, environmental impacts, the cost effectiveness of control methods, and social and legal concerns. Control strategies may include the application of one or more techniques, and consideration is first given to nonlethal methods when practical and effective. WS professionals provide biologically sound, effective, and accountable solutions to wildlife problems.

In all instances, WS programs are conducted to ensure no lasting negative impact on wildlife populations. WS professionals strive to educate the public and producers about the importance of using responsible strategies for living with wildlife.

WS helps to reduce damage caused by wildlife to crops and livestock, natural resources, public and private property, and public health and safety. WS helps resolve bird hazards to aircraft; starling and blackbird contamination at feedlots;

bird damage to aquaculture; urban starling and blackbird roosts; nuisance Canada geese; perdition of waterfowl and livestock; beaver flooding roads and damaging timber; deer damaging orchards, crops, and ornamental landscaping; bear destroying timber and beehives; wildlife-borne diseases, such as rabies and plague; and wildlife threats to endangered species.

WS professionals recommend and use an integrated wildlife damage management approach to reduce wildlife damage. This approach employs methods to prevent damage from occurring and to stop damage once it begins.

All techniques used meet strict guidelines for safety, selectivity, and effectiveness. These methods may involve changing management practices, modifying habitat, dispersing animals, or removing wildlife. A combination of these approaches is generally used.

WS's National Wildlife Research Center improves techniques available to WS and develops new methods for managing wildlife damage.

Contact

For more information about the services available from WS, call (866) 4US-DAWS.

William H. Clay, Deputy Administrator
National Program Office
Wildlife Services
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
Ag Box 3402
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20250-3402
Phone: 720-2054; Fax: (202) 690-0053

Internet

www.aphis.usda.gov/ws/

Wood In Transportation Program (WIT)

Improving local communities and infrastructure systems while using America's primary renewable resource, wood; the aim of commercialization projects is to showcase wood-in-transportation technology for potential users

The USDA Forest Service's Wood In Transportation (WIT) program provides financial and technical assistance for demonstration and commercialization of technologies using wood in local transportation networks.

Improvements in wood treatment, engineered wood composite products, and bridge designs make wood a cost-effective alternative material to use for replacing deteriorating bridges in many situations. These advances also open the door to a realm of opportunities to add value to underutilized timber species, create new rural timber based industries, and improve rural transportation networks.

The WIT program introduces people to these opportunities, gives them access to information on the latest technology, and assists them in pioneering efforts that will create new markets and better ways to manage forest resources.

In 1996, commercialization projects were introduced as a component to the grants program to foster the commercialization of modern wood-in-transportation technology. A key concept of these projects is to develop cooperative partnerships that join public and private entities and promote productive efforts to satisfy local transportation needs and stimulate local economic vitality.

Project Examples

- **The National Timber Bridge Design Competition** is an annual event open to student chapters of American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) and Forest Products Society (FPS) in the United States and Canada. Joint or cooperative entries are eligible and encouraged. The competition aims to promote interest in the use of wood as a competitive bridge construction material; generate innovative and cost-effective

timber bridge design techniques; and develop an appreciation of the engineering capabilities of wood.

- **The National Timber Bridge Awards Program** recognizes premiere timber bridges across the United States as winners in a periodic National Timber Bridge Competition. The competition is divided into five categories: long span vehicular timber bridges (more than 40 feet), short span vehicular timber bridges (less than 40 feet), covered bridges, rehabilitation of existing bridges, and pedestrian timber bridges.

The major sponsors of the program included APA-The Engineered Wood Association, the American Institute of Timber Construction, the USDA Forest Service, and the Federal Highway Administration. The American Wood Preservers Institute and Roads and Bridges Magazine were supporting sponsors for 2002 competition.

- **Standard Plans for Timber Bridges.** The U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, USDA Forest Service, Forest Products Laboratory, and Laminated Concepts, Inc., developed standardized timber bridge plans that have recently become publicly available. The plans include standardized designs and details using the allowable stress design approach for seven timber bridge superstructure types. The types include five longitudinal deck and two beam systems using both sawn lumber and glued-laminated timber.

Application and Financial Information

An application package is developed each year to provide guidelines for applicants. These applications are available to potential cooperators in the fall of each year. Normally, applicants have 2

to 3 months to complete the application. Formal notification about projects selected for funding is issued in March or April.

The maximum Forest Service cost-share amount is \$50,000 for vehicular bridge projects, \$20,000 for pedestrian/trail bridge projects, \$150,000 for commercialization projects, and \$30,000 for special projects. The Forest Service contribution must be equal to or less than the cooperator's contribution to ensure up to a 50 percent match of federal funds. Matching funds cannot be other federal funds.

A commercialization project is defined as a project that results in the design and construction of multiple structures per project; such as, construction of four bridges using the same basic design, the same engineer and/or engineering firm, the same fabricator, the same construction firm, and preferably local timber resources within a single- or multi-county area.

The purpose of these projects is to foster the commercialization of modern WIT technology that has been developed during the past 14 years of the program. Types of structures that are eligible for funding include vehicular bridges, pedes-

trian bridges, portable bridges, railroad bridges, piers, and sound barriers.

Even though WIT emphasizes commercialization projects, it does accept applications that propose a single vehicular or pedestrian bridge or related transportation structure. Applications can be downloaded from the National Wood In Transportation Information Center's website (www.fs.fed.us/na/wit/WITPages/grants.html).

Eligibility, Uses and Restrictions

Local and state governments and nonprofit organizations are eligible provided the structure is to be built on public lands. This funding opportunity is not intended to be a cure for all deficient bridges/structures, but rather to demonstrate the feasibility of modern timber structures as an economical solution. Proposals to rehabilitate or rebuild covered bridges will not be accepted.

Contact

Regional and national contacts can be found at the following website:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/na/wit/WITPages/coordinators.html>

Index of Services and Information

Federal agencies in the 2004 Building Better Rural Places directory were asked to provide up to 10 keywords identifying specific areas for which they offer information, products and services to the public.

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