

# A Guide to Agriculture and Rural Development Funding Opportunities and Incentives

*How to Navigate the Funding Process*

U.S. Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand  
New York



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*\*Note: This document will be continuously updated as information becomes available.*

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## Introduction

Dear Fellow New Yorker,

As a both an urban and rural state, New York confronts a lot of the challenges small towns face across the country, including family farms that struggle to remain solvent and the high cost of bringing broadband and sophisticated health services to citizens. Each year, the federal and New York State governments distribute billions of dollars worth of grants and loans for agriculture and rural development programs. With many individuals struggling during these tough economic times, I am committed to assisting New Yorkers with securing funding that can expand economic opportunity for our rural communities.

Finding the resources that meet your needs in this complex web of agencies can be an impossible task. For this reason, I have created this guidebook to serve as a starting point in providing information about what resources are available to individuals, businesses, community organizations and local governments.

The information in this guidebook details energy program grants, loans, and tax credits. Its contents are by no means comprehensive; as new programs and opportunities emerge, its contents will be updated to provide New Yorkers with the most information possible.

The guidebook is comprised of six different sections, each providing information about grant funding sources, strategies for writing effective grant proposals and ways in which my office can assist you in this process.

My Senate website ([www.Gillibrand.senate.gov](http://www.Gillibrand.senate.gov)) is continually updated with critical information about various funding opportunities that are available to you, how to access them, and where to apply. As you move forward with any grant opportunities, please contact Jon Cardinal, my Grants Director, for letters of support, when applicable. You can reach him in my Washington, D.C. Office at [Grants@Gillibrand.Senate.gov](mailto:Grants@Gillibrand.Senate.gov), or (202)-224-4451.

Sincerely,



Kirsten E. Gillibrand

## Section I

### USDA Rural Housing Service (RHS)

USDA Rural Development is committed to helping improve the economy and quality of life in rural America. Through their programs, Rural Development touches upon each aspect of rural America in a precise and organized manner.

The financial programs support essential public facilities and services such as water and sewer systems, housing, health clinics, emergency service facilities and electric and telephone service. Rural Development has continuously promoted economic development by supporting loans to businesses through banks, credit unions, and community managed lending pools. They offer technical assistance and information to help agricultural producers and cooperatives get started and improve their effectiveness of their operations. Additionally, they have provided technical assistance to help communities undertake community empowerment programs.

To achieve their mission, Rural Development assists rural individuals, communities and businesses to obtain the financial and technical assistance needed to address their diverse and unique needs through their specific programs.

Below, you will find a subsection of USDA Rural Development call Rural Housing Services. These branches of the overall operation are necessary to meet the needs of rural America.

#### **1) Section 504 Very Low-Income Rural Housing Repair Loan and Grant Program**

- This program provides loan and grant assistance to very-low and low-income homeowners to make housing repairs that remove a variety of health and safety hazards from their houses or to enhance or modernize a home. Grants may be used to cover the costs of such improvements as repairing roofs, providing toilet facilities, providing a convenient and sanitary water supply, and installation costs in obtaining central water and sewer service.

##### **Additional Information:**

- Loans of up to \$20,000 and grants of up to \$7,500 are available.

##### **Eligibility:**

- Availability of loans is provided to low-income rural residents who own and occupy a dwelling in need of repair. A homeowner must be unable to obtain affordable credit elsewhere. Grants are limited to elderly home owners (age 62 and older) whose incomes are 50% or less of the median in the rural area where they dwell. The removal of a health or safety hazard is the only use for grant funds. Loan and grant assistance cannot surpass \$27,000 to an individual.

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*Applying for Farm Loans from the Small Business Administration*

- The Small Business Administration (SBA) also oversees its own loan program targeted for small customers. As a result, the sums of money given out by the SBA are typically much less than funding given out by the USDA.

**Additional Information:**

- The SBA places a debenture for the 504 program at \$2 million if the project meets a public policy goal or \$1.5 million if it does not. Lower amounts are, however, much more typical.

**Eligibility:**

- The 504 loan program has a different size standard for all small businesses which is tangible net worth not in excess of \$8.5 million and average net income (after federal income taxes) not in excess of \$3 million. Additionally, this funding can be targeted at farms that are not meant primarily for agriculture use.

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- Point of Contact: New York State Regional Branch  
26 Federal Plaza, Suite 3100  
New York, New York 10278  
Telephone: (212) 264-4354  
Website:  
[http://www.sba.gov/smallbusinessplanner/start/financestatup/Serv\\_LT\\_504.html](http://www.sba.gov/smallbusinessplanner/start/financestatup/Serv_LT_504.html)

## 2) Section 514 and 516 Farm Labor Housing Program Loan and Grant Program

- This nationwide program is the only one to provide housing for farm laborers. Loans and grants are provided to buy, build, improve, or repair housing for farm labor, including persons whose income is earned in aquaculture and on-farm processing. Loans to finance affordable, off-farm rental housing to low-wage farm workers are used in conjunction with those from the section 516 grants.

**Additional Information:**

- Direct loans are issued by this program to farm owners, Indian tribes, farmer associations, public bodies, and nonprofit organizations providing living quarters, furnishings, and related facilities for domestic farm workers. Section 514 loans have a 1% interest rate and a maximum repayment term of 33 years. Grants may include up to 90% of development costs.

**Eligibility:**

- Farm workers who lease Section 514/516 units must be either U.S. citizens or permanent residents. With that the majority of their income must come from farm work. Government or nonprofit organizations are the only groups eligible to receive funding from this grant.

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### 3) Section 502 Single Family Housing Direct Loan Program

- This is USDA's main housing loan program and is designed to help low-income individuals purchase houses in rural areas. To help maintain the homes of the programs borrowers during financial crises, it provides "supervised credit," including pre-loan and post-loan credit counseling. While the program benefits rural areas nationwide, the highest benefits (in per capita dollars) are in low-income areas such as the Delta South and rapidly growing areas in the West.

**Additional Information:**

- Loans are subsidized at a graduated interest rate of 1% over Treasury's cost of money, depending on family income. Applicants may attain 100% financing and loans are for up to 33 years (38 years for those with incomes below 60% of the area median household income). Interest rates are decided so that a family pays from 22% to 26% of their income for principal, interest, taxes, and insurance.

**Eligibility:**

- Borrowers must be either very-low income or low-income. A very-low income borrower consists of less than 50% of median family income in the rural area where they reside, while a low-income borrower consists of 50-80% of median family income. Housing must be modest in size, design, and cost.

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#### 4) Mutual and Self-Help Grant Program

- To reduce the costs of home ownership, this program allows very-low and low income rural Americans to use “sweat equity”. Nonprofit organizations and local governments may obtain grant funds to permit them to provide technical assistance to groups of families that work considerably to build their houses. Typically, future homeowners use Section 502 direct loans to finance their mortgages. By using their own labor on constructing the house, they are able to reduce costs by 10%-15% while learning construction skills.

**Additional Information:**

- Grantees also use Section 502 loans, however other mortgage tools can be used as well. Participating nonprofit organizations may use funds to pay salaries, rent and office expenses. Pre-development grants up to \$10,000 are available to qualified organizations.

**Eligibility:**

- Low income borrowers are eligible for the program; which involves 50%-80% of area median family income.

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#### 5) Section 523 Mutual Self-Help Technical Assistance Grant

- The Mutual Self-Help Housing Program makes homes affordable by enabling future homeowners to work on homes themselves. With this investment in the home, or "sweat equity", each homeowner pays less for his or her home than if it were built by a contractor. This presents very-low and low-income families with an opportunity to own their home.

**Additional Information:**

- Grants are provided to nonprofit and local government organizations, which supervise groups of 10 to 12 enrollees in the Self-Help Program. Members of each group help work on each other's homes, moving in only when all the homes are completed.

- Loans are for two years. Section 523 loans bear 3 percent interest. At the discretion of the customer, Section 524 loans bear the market rate of interest either at the time of approval or at the time of the loan closing.

**Eligibility:**

- Eligible organizations include nonprofit organizations, public bodies and Federally-recognized Indian groups.

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## 6) Section 524 Rural Housing Site Loan Program

- This program is similar to the Section 523 program above, except however once the sites are developed, they may be provided to any low- or moderate-income person, not just to the self-help participant.

**Additional Information:**

- Section 524 loans endure the market rate of interest and are two year loans.

**Eligibility:**

- These loans are made to obtain and develop sites for any low-or moderate-income family.

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## 7) Section 533 Housing Preservation Grant Program

- Similar to the Section 514 and 516 grants, this program provides funding through nonprofit groups, Indian tribes, and government agencies to very-low and low-income home owners. This grant is for repairing houses and to rental property owners for the rehabilitation of rental and cooperative housing to be rented to very-low and low-income families.

**Additional Information:**

- The grants are competitive and are made available in areas where there is a concentration of need.

**Eligibility:**

- Low and very-low income rural residents are eligible for these grants. They may also be made to rental property owners, as long as they agree to make such units available to low and very-low income occupants. Assistance is limited to \$15,000 per unit.

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## 8) Section 515 Rural Rental Housing Direct Loans

- The Section 515 rental housing program houses the poor through 50-year, 1% loans and rental assistance. The program is usually used in conjunction with the Section 521 Rental Assistance Program (see below). Tenants pay a maximum of 30% of their income toward rent and utilities, with assistance. Some 515 projects also use Housing and Urban Development Section 8 project based assistance which enables additional very-low income families to be helped. There are four variations of the Section 515 loan program: (1) Cooperative Housing, (2) Downtown Renewal Areas, (3) Congregate Housing or Group Homes for Persons with Disabilities, and (4) the Rural Housing Demonstration Program.

**Additional Information:**

- This program uses a public-private partnership to provide direct subsidized interest loans at 1% interest rate to limited-profit and nonprofit developers. It also is used to construct or to renovate affordable rental complexes in rural areas.

**Eligibility:**

- Section 515 is for very-low, low-, and moderate-income families. In new Section 515 projects, 95% of tenants must have very-low incomes, while in existing projects 75% of new tenants must have very low incomes.

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## 9) Section 521 Rental Assistance Program

- This program's objective is to help relieve the burden on the nearly 25% of rural households who pay more than 30% of their income on housing costs.

### **Additional Information:**

- Rental Assistance is project-based assistance used in conjunction with Section 515 and Section 514/516 loan/grant programs. The Section 521 program provides rental assistance directly to the owners of some RHS-financed projects under contracts specifying that beneficiaries will pay no more than 30% of their income for rent. The program makes up the difference between the tenant's contribution and the rental charge. The subsidy indirectly goes to the tenant through lower rent payments.

### **Eligibility:**

- To be eligible the subsidy goes to the housing unit, not an individual tenant.

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## 10) Rural Community Facilities Program Account

- The Community Facilities Program Account is one of three funding streams of the Rural Community Advancement Program (RCAP) authorized by the 1996 farm bill. Administered by the RHS, the Community Facilities loan and grant program supports essential community facilities such as fire stations, community centers, and medical clinics.

### **Additional Information:**

- State directors set priorities particular to their state's rural needs, so that funding is allocated to rural development offices. State directors are authorized to transfer up to 25% of the amount in each RCAP account billed for the state to any of the other accounts.
- Grants are authorized on a graduated scale. Applicants in smaller communities will receive more of the grant money.

### **Eligibility:**

- Grants are available to public entities such as municipalities, counties and special-purpose districts, as well as non-profit corporations and tribal governments with a population no higher than 20,000 residents. Also, the applicants must have the legal authority for construction, operation and maintenance for the facility and be unable to attain the funds from commercial sources.

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## 11) Community Facility direct and Guaranteed Loans

- Loans are developed for constructing, enlarging, or improving essential community facilities in rural areas and towns of no more than 20,000 populations. The highest priority goes to projects located in a community with population of 5,000 or less and to projects serving communities with median household incomes below the higher of the poverty line or 60% of the state non-metropolitan median household income. Priority areas include healthcare, public safety, or public and community services.

**Additional Information:**

- Priority is for loans to build essential community facilities that support public health and safety.

**Eligibility:**

- Eligible applicants must demonstrate that they cannot obtain funding in the commercial market at reasonable rates. Applications for health and public safety projects receive the highest priority. Interest rates are determined by the median family income of the area and range from 4.5% to 5.375%. In the case of guaranteed loans, the loans are made by a private lender and the interest rate is negotiated between lender and borrower.

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## 12) Rural Community Development Initiative Grants

- The program provides grants from RCAP accounts for capacity-building among private, nonprofit community development organizations and low income rural communities. The areas of which they cover are housing, community facilities, and community and economic development.

**Additional Information:**

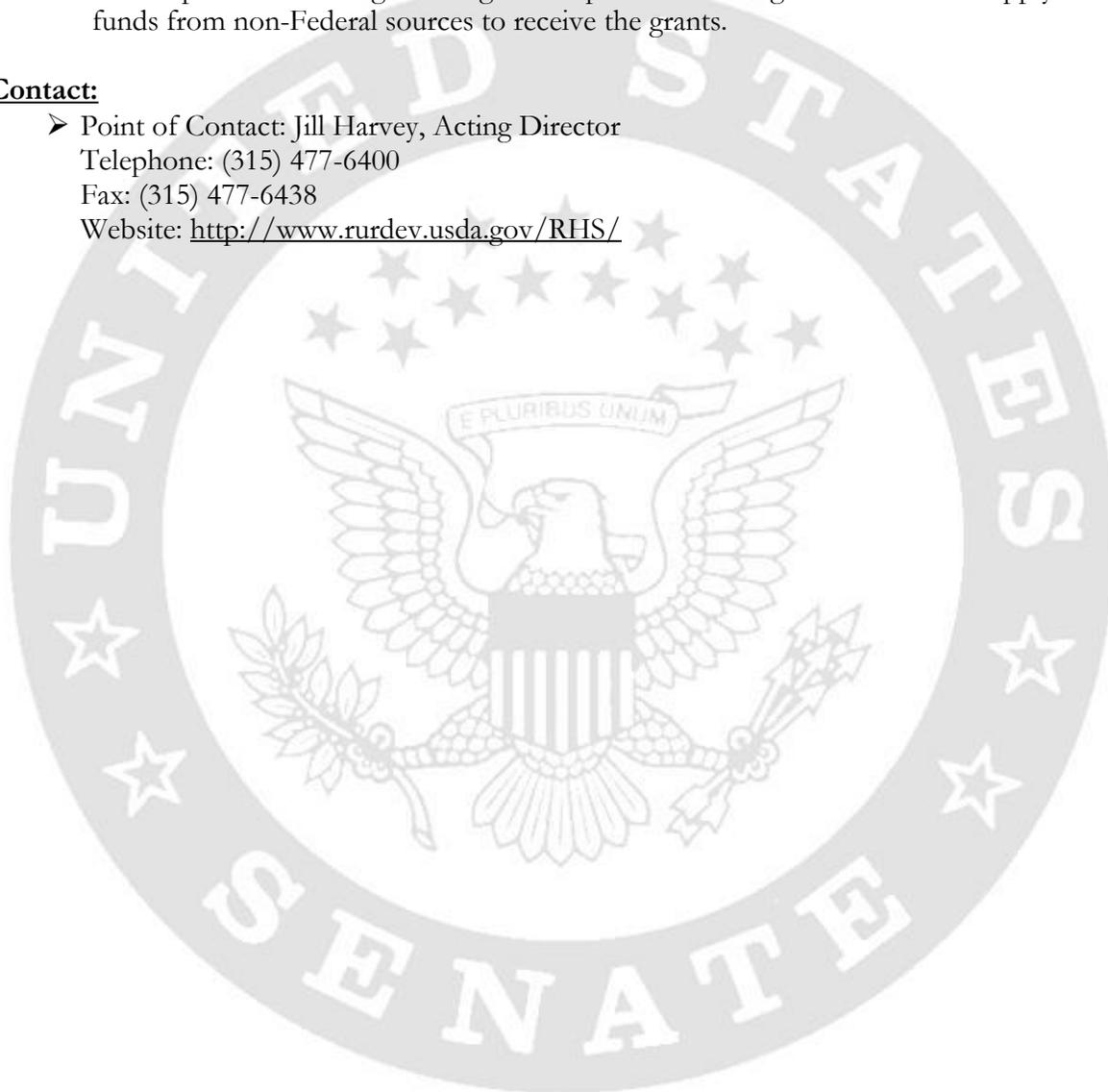
- Competitive grants require dollar for dollar matching funds in this program.

**Eligibility:**

- Funds are available to qualified intermediaries that can be public or private organizations (including tribal organizations) that have been legally organized for at least three years and have experience working with eligible recipients. Such organizations must supply matching funds from non-Federal sources to receive the grants.

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## Section II

### USDA Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS)

For nearly 75 years, creating and retaining employment in rural areas has been a central focus of the USDA Rural Business Cooperative Service. Originally, agriculture, mining, fishing, and timbering related jobs were major targets of public funding.

Since the mid-1950s, manufacturing was regarded as the most promising source of rural employment as jobs in the primary sector declined. While manufacturing has provided relatively high-paying and stable employment for many rural residents, the U.S. rural manufacturing sector finds itself today competing with Eastern Europe and other developing countries. Leaving the U.S. rural areas are low-skilled, peripheral manufacturing facilities.

Today, rural areas are trying to create new sources of competitive advantage in more technologically advanced production with higher-skill labor. The RBS provides loans and grants to help local entrepreneurs start up businesses and expand existing businesses; with a lack of capital (a significant factor in many rural areas). 14 Other RBS programs provide specialized technical and marketing assistance. Several programs authorized in the 2002 farm bill (P.L. 107-171) and in the House- and Senate-passed 2007 farm bills, address the new needs of rural businesses. This especially includes a capital formation.

#### **1) Rural Intermediary Relending Program**

- These direct loans are made to private nonprofit corporations, state or local government agencies, Indian tribes, and cooperatives. In turn these groups lend the funds to rural businesses, private nonprofit organizations, and others. Assistance from the intermediary to the ultimate recipient must be for economic development projects, establishment of new businesses, and/or expansion of existing businesses, creation of new employment opportunities and/or saving existing rural jobs.

#### **Additional Information:**

- Loans are made by RBS to intermediaries, which provide loans to ultimate recipients for business facilities and community development projects.

#### **Eligibility:**

- Financing is restricted to community development projects not within the outer boundary of any city having a population of 25,000 or less.

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## 2) Rural Economic Development Loans and Grants

- This program offers zero-interest loans for RUS borrowers. These borrowers then re-lend the funds at zero interest to rural businesses. In order to support economic development in rural areas, a loan fund program is established by grants. This fund provides assets to nonprofit organizations and public organizations to finance community facilities in rural areas. This promotes job creation, education and training to enhance marketable skills or improve medical care.

### **Additional Information:**

- Funds are provided from the interest differential on Rural Utilities Service borrowers' cushion of credit accounts. The cushion of credit account was established under Section 313 of the Rural Electrification Act (REA). Under this program, RUS borrowers may make voluntary payments into a specific account. A borrower's cushion of credit account balance collects interest to the borrower at an annual rate of 5%. The amounts in the cushion of credit account (deposits and earned interest) can only be used to make scheduled payments on loans made or guaranteed under REA.

### **Eligibility:**

- Loans are made to electric and telephone utilities that have current loans with the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) or Rural Telephone Bank loans. It can also consist of guarantees that are not delinquent on any federal debt or in bankruptcy proceedings.
- Economic development projects benefitting rural areas are eligible for this program. Funding may be used for feasibility studies, start-up costs, and incubator project

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### 3) Rural Cooperative Development Grants

- These grants were established under the 1996 farm bill which eliminated the term “technology” from the previously authorized Rural Technology and Cooperative Development Grant Program. Their primary purpose was to improve economic conditions in rural areas through the creation of new cooperated; grants are made to fund the establishment and operation of centers for rural cooperative development. The 2008 farm bill reserves 20% of the appropriated funding (if the total appropriation exceeds \$7.5 million) for cooperative development centers, individual cooperatives, or groups of cooperatives that serve socially disadvantaged groups.

#### **Additional Information:**

- In terms of this program, rural is defined as territories of a state that are not within the outer boundary of any city containing a population of 50,000 or more based on the latest census of the United States.

#### **Eligibility:**

- Nonprofit institutions or higher education institutions may receive grants. They may be used to pay up to 75% of the cost of the project and associated administrative costs. The applicant must contribute 25% from non-federal sources. Grants under this program are competitive and awarded on specific selection criteria. They are also made to assist small minority producers.

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### 4) Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA) Program

- A cooperative agreement established by the 1985 farm bill, the program was transferred to the Department of Interior’s Fish and Wildlife Service in 1990. The 1996 farm bill moved the program back to USDA’s Rural Business Service. The program is a report of the Rural Cooperative Grants program. It provides useful facts to farmers and other rural users on a variety of sustainable agricultural practices that include both cropping and livestock operations. The ATTRA program is located on the University of Arkansas campus at Fayetteville, Arkansas, and serves as an information and technical support center staffed with agriculture specialists.

**Additional Information:**

- The program is funded through a collective agreement between the not-for profit National Center for Appropriate Technology and the Rural Business-Cooperative Service.

**Eligibility:**

- This program is available to everyone.

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## 5) Value-Added Agricultural Production Grants

- This is a competitive grant program to support farmers and ranchers in generating greater value for agricultural commodities. A portion of the funds was reserved for the enactment of the Agricultural Demonstration Centers, which will offer training and technical assistance to new or enlarged value-added agricultural enterprises. Ten centers were established in FY2003 and were subsidized at \$1 million each.

**Eligibility:**

- Profit and nonprofit organizations, cooperatives. To receive reserved funds from this grant the applicant must be a beginning farmer, socially disadvantaged farmer, mid-tier value chain producer.

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## 6) Rural Business Investment Program

- This program creates limited liability companies (Rural Business Investment Companies) to make equity capital investments in rural businesses.

### **Additional Information:**

- These companies will be financed with both private funds and debt instruments guaranteed by the federal government.
- Rural Business Investment Companies (RBICs) must identify targeted Rural Areas and demonstrate how they will assist those areas through disciplined, profit-oriented investing in rural enterprises and through hands-on technical assistance to rural enterprises via Operational Assistance (OA) Grant funding.

### **Eligibility:**

- Designation by the Secretary as a Rural Business Company.

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## 7) Business and Industry (B&I) Direct and Guaranteed Loans

- This program finances business and industry acquisition, construction, conversion, expansion, and repair in rural areas. Loan funds can be used to finance, purchase and development of land, supplies and materials, and pay start-up costs of rural businesses.

### **Additional Information:**

- Lenders provide subsidized interest loans and guarantees for loans. Interest rates can be negotiated between the lender and borrower. The maximum guaranteed loan is for \$25 million. Loans of \$5 million or less have a maximum percentage of guarantee is 80%. For loans between \$5 and \$10 million, maximum percentage of guarantees 70%. For loans between \$10 and \$25 million, maximum percentage of guarantee is 60%.

### **Eligibility:**

- The borrower must be unable to obtain credit from other lenders to be eligible. Criteria for projects are (1) those that save existing jobs, (2) those that improve existing businesses or

industry, and (3) those that create the greatest number of permanent jobs. Golf courses, race tracks, and gambling operations are ineligible.

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## 8) Rural Business Opportunity Grants

- These competitive grants are made available for training and technical assistance to rural businesses, economic planning for rural communities, or training for rural entrepreneurs or economic development officials.

**Eligibility:**

- Grants are eligible to public bodies, nonprofit corporations, federally recognized tribal groups, and cooperatives with members that are primarily rural residents.

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## 9) Rural Business Enterprise Grants

- The goal of these grants are to encourage the development of small and emerging business enterprises and to create and expand rural distance learning networks, and to provide educational instruction or job training related to potential employment for adult students.

**Additional Information:**

- These grants are available to qualified nonprofit organizations for technical assistance and training to rural communities for improving passenger transportation services or facilities.

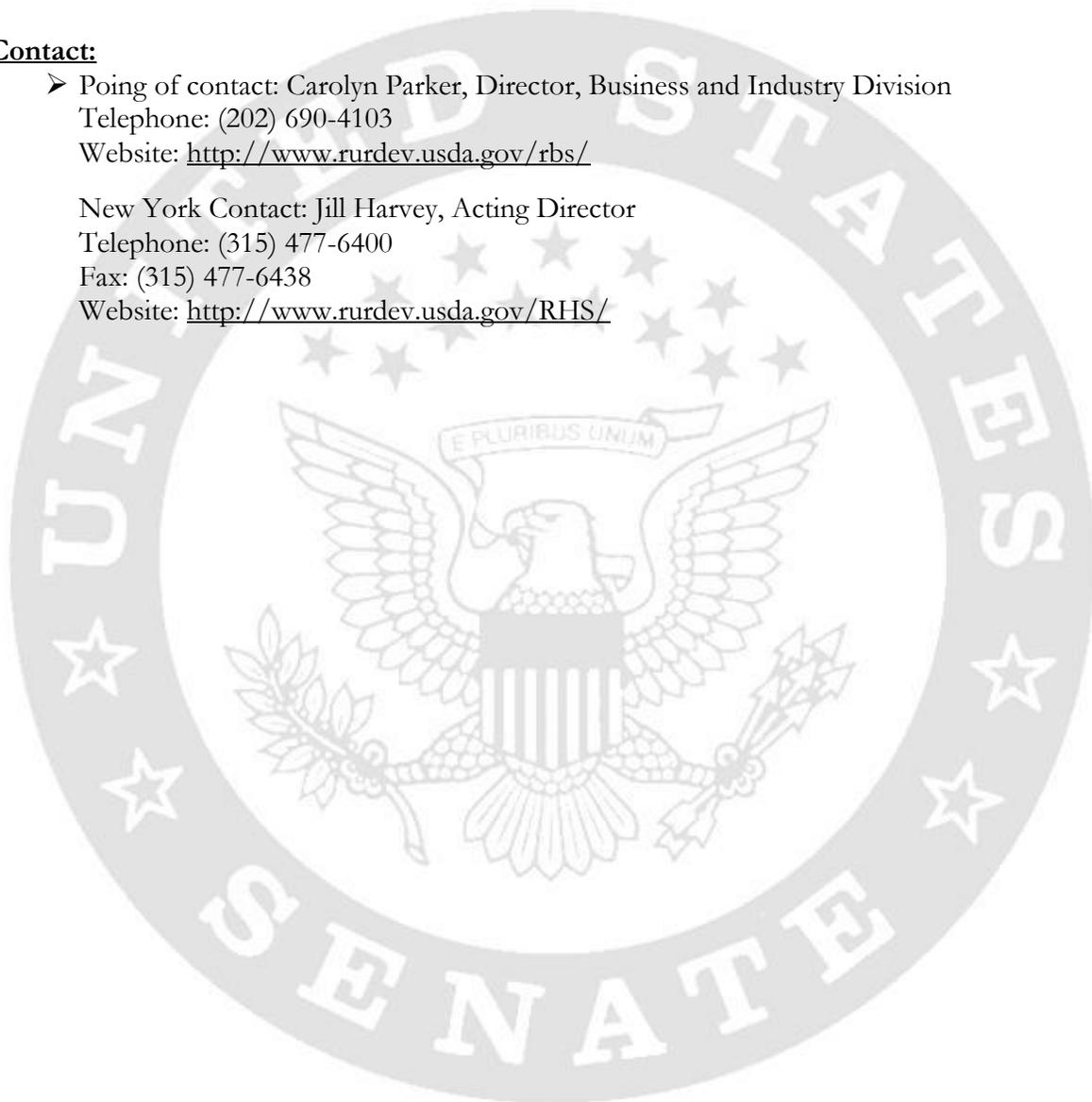
**Eligibility:**

- This grant program gives priority to rural areas having a population of 25,000 or less. It is preferred that these grants are used on projects in communities with large proportion of low-income residents and/or high unemployment.

**Contact:**

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Website: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/>

New York Contact: Jill Harvey, Acting Director  
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## Section III

### USDA Rural Utilities Service (RUS)

Modern utilities came to rural America through some of the most successful government initiatives in American history, carried out through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) working with rural cooperatives, nonprofit associations, public bodies, and for-profit utilities. Today, USDA Rural Development Utilities Programs carries on this tradition helping rural utilities expand and keep their technology up-to-date, helping establish new and vital services such as distance learning and telemedicine. The public-private partnership which is forged between Rural Development Utilities Programs and these industries results in billions of dollars in rural infrastructure development and creates thousands of jobs for the American economy.

#### 1) Electrification Loan Program

- This loan program aims to expand, upgrade, maintain, and replace rural electric infrastructure. Borrowers must generally obtain approximately half their capital needs from the private sector.

##### Additional Information:

- Most loans have an interest rate capped at 7%. There are three loan levels:
  - Hardship loans which are made to applicants whose consumers fall below average per capita and household income thresholds.
  - Municipal rate loans are based on interest rates available in the municipal bond market. Borrowers are required to seek supplemental financing for 30% of their capital requirements.
  - Treasury rate loans are based on rates established daily by the U.S. Treasury.

##### Eligibility:

- Electricity producers and transmitters in rural areas.

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## 2) Telecommunications Loans

- This program makes loans for infrastructure improvement and expansion to improve telephone service, including a variety of related telecommunications purposes such as broadband service in rural areas.

### **Additional Information:**

- This program gives loans for construction, expansion, and operation of telecommunication lines and facilities or systems.

### **Eligibility:**

- Three loan levels:
  - Hardship loans are made to applicants whose consumers fall below average per capita and household income thresholds.
  - Municipal rate loans are based on interest rates available in the municipal bond market.
  - Treasury rate loans are based on rates established daily by the U.S. Treasury. Guaranteed loans are made through the Federal Financing Bank.

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## 3) Distance Learning and Telemedicine Loans and Grants

- This program provides financial assistance to schools, libraries, hospitals, and medical centers especially in rural areas. Additionally, it helps rural schools and hospitals obtain and use advanced telecommunications for health and educational services.

### **Additional Information:**

- Interest rates depend on the financial state of the borrower and the cost of providing service. The program also makes guaranteed loans.

### **Eligibility:**

- Loans are made to utilities serving rural communities. Most rural systems are eligible for loans at a hardship rate of 4%.

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#### 4) Rural Telephone Bank

- The Rural Telephone Bank (RTB) aims to ensure rural telephone system' access to private sources of capital. It does this by establishing a supplemental credit system to borrow capital requirements. The capital structure of the Telephone Bank consists of three classes of stock: Class A, Class B, and Class C. Class A stock was issued to the Telephone Bank in exchange for appropriated \$600 million of capital provided by the taxpayers. This provided the Telephone Bank with its initial “seed” money to begin its lending operations. Through sales of Class A stock, the RTB is now privatized.

**Additional Information:**

- The interest rate given to the borrower depends on the financial condition of the borrower system and the costs of providing service to rural subscribers. The majority if rural systems are eligible for loans at hardship rate of 5%.

**Eligibility:**

- Utilities serving rural communities.

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#### 5) Broadband Loans and Grants

- RUS provides loans and grants to support acquisition and construction of broadband facilities in under-served rural areas.

**Additional Information:**

- The “community-oriented connectivity” approach will target rural, economically-challenged communities. It will offer a means for the deployment of broadband transmission services to rural schools, libraries, education centers, health care providers, law enforcement agencies, public safety organizations as well as residents and businesses. Interest rates on loans on the

financial condition of the borrower system and, the costs of providing service to rural subscribers. There are three interest rate levels: hardship, treasury, and municipal. Treasury loans may be supplemented by loans from the Rural Telephone Bank. Most rural systems are eligible for loans at a hardship rate of 4%.

**Eligibility:**

- Community eligibility requirements for funding through the Community Connect Broadband Grant Program include areas with 20,000 or fewer residents, no previous access to broadband transmission service; and a minimum corresponding contribution, equal to 15% of the grant amount awarded.

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## 6) Enhancement of Access to Broadband Service in Rural Areas

- This program provides loans, grants, and loan guarantees to construct, enhance, and obtain facilities and equipment; which will provide broadband service to rural areas with less than 20,000 residents.

**Additional Information:**

- For direct loans indicated by this enhancement, its interest rate is capped at 4%.

**Eligibility:**

- Rural areas of less than 20,000 populations and outside of an urban/metro commuting area are eligible.

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## 7) Local Television Loans

- The legislation provides for the establishment of the Local Television Loan Guarantee Board. The program facilitates access, on a technologically neutral basis, to signals of local television stations for households located in non-served or under-served areas.

### **Additional Information:**

- This program was authorized by the Launching Our Communities' Access to Local Television Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-553). The Loan Guarantee Board is authorized to approve loan guarantees of up to 80% of the total loan amount for no more than \$1.25 billion in loans.

### **Eligibility:**

- A guarantee may not be approved for a project that is designed primarily to serve one or more of the top 40 designated market areas.

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## 8) Rural Water and Waste Disposal Program Account

- The Water and Waste Disposal Program Account is one of three funding streams of the Rural Community Advancement Program (RCAP) authorized by the 1996 farm bill. The Rural Water and Waste Disposal Account, administered by RUS, supports construction and improvements to rural community water systems who are unable to get affordable credit in the private market.

### **Additional Information:**

- Funding for the loan program is allocated to state rural development offices by formula where state directors set priorities particular to their state's rural needs. State directors are authorized to transfer up to 25% of the amount in each RCAP account allocated for the state to any of the other accounts.

### **Eligibility:**

- The Water and Waste loan and grant programs assist eligible applicants in rural areas and cities and towns of up to 10,000 residents. Drinking water, sanitary sewerage, solid waste disposal and storm drainage facilities may be financed with direct and guaranteed loans as well as grants. Applications originate with State Rural Development offices.

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## 9) Water and Waste Disposal Direct and Guaranteed Loans

- Loans are made to public bodies, organizations operated on a not-for-profit basis, and Indian tribes on federal and state reservations for development of storage, treatment, purification, or distribution of water or for collection, treatment, and disposal of waste in rural areas. Loans are repayable in not more than 40 years, or the useful life of the facility, whichever is less. The water and waste disposal account is the largest of the three RCAP accounts, accounting for 87% of the total RCAP funding.

**Additional Information:**

- Direct loans carry interest rates not in excess of the current market yield for comparable term municipal obligations. The interest rate on loans cannot exceed 5% (they are currently being made at 4.5%) for those areas where the (1) median household income of the service area falls below the highest of 80% of the statewide non-metro median household income or the poverty level; and (2) the project is needed to meet applicable health or sanitary standards. The intermediate rate, which is halfway between the poverty rate and the market rate, with a ceiling of 7%, applies to those projects that do not meet the requirements for the poverty rate but are located in areas where the median household income does not exceed 100% of the statewide non-metro median household income. *Guaranteed loans* are made to the same groups and for similar purposes except that loans are guaranteed by RUS for 80% of the loan amount or, in exceptional circumstances, 90% of the loan amount. The interest rate is negotiated between borrower and lender.

**Eligibility:**

- A rural area may include an area in any city or town that has a population of not more than 10,000 residents. Applicants must be unable to obtain sufficient credit elsewhere at reasonable rates to finance actual needs.

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## 10) Water and Waste Disposal Grants

- Grants are made to public, quasi-public, and nonprofit associations as in the loan program. Grants are directed to projects serving the most financially needy communities that have a median household income, which falls below the higher of the poverty level or 100% of the state's non-metro household income.

### Additional Information:

- Grant amounts for lower income levels they may not exceed 75% of the eligible development costs of the project. In addition, between 1% and 3% of the grant funds appropriated each year for water and waste water is available for technical assistance and training to assist communities. This involves identifying and evaluating alternative solutions to problems related to water and waste disposal, preparing applications, as well as bettering operation and maintenance practices at existing facilities.

### Eligibility:

- For a grant of up to 70% of eligible costs, service area median household income must be below the poverty level or below 80% of the State non-metropolitan median household income, whichever is higher. Grants are made only if needed to reduce user charges to a reasonable level.

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## 11) Solid Waste Management Grants

- Grants are made to local and regional governments and to nonprofit organizations. They provide technical assistance and training for the purposes of reducing or eliminating pollution of water resources as well as improving management of solid waste facilities.

### Eligibility:

- Assistance is available in rural areas and towns with a population of 10,000 or less.
- Entities eligible for Solid Waste Management (SWM) grants are:
  - Private nonprofit organizations with tax exempt status designated by the Internal Revenue Service. A nonprofit organization is defined as any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization that:
    - Is operated primarily for scientific, education, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest.

- Is not organized primarily for profit.
- Uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve, and/or expand its operations.
- Public bodies.
- Federally acknowledged or State recognized Native American tribe or group.
- Academic institutions.
- Private businesses, Federal agencies, and individuals are ineligible for these grants.

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Website: <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/SWVG.htm>

## 12) Emergency and Imminent Community Water Assistance Grants

- Target communities for this program are those that have experienced a significant decline in either their quantity or quality of drinking water.

**Additional Information:**

- Grants can be made in rural areas and cities or towns with a population not in excess of 10,000 and a median household income not more than 100% of a State's nonmetropolitan median household income. Grants may be made for 100% of project costs.
- When significant declines in water quality/quantity occurred within a period of two years up to \$500,000 in grant funding may be issued. In cases where emergency repairs and replacement of facilities on existing systems are required the maximum grant size is \$75,000.

**Eligibility:**

- For declared emergencies and disasters and for communities facing actual or imminent drinking water shortages.

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### 13) Water and Well System Grants

- This competitive grant program provides funding enabling nonprofit organizations to finance projects involving the construction and refurbishing of household water well systems in rural areas for moderate to low income individuals.

**Eligibility:**

- Priority to non-profit organizations with demonstrated expertise in providing well-water systems.

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### 14) Technical Assistance and Training (TAT) Grants

- Rural communities with populations of less than 10,000 are entitled to a percentage of the Water and Wastewater Grant Program to provide technical assistance.

**Additional Information:**

- . These funds may be used to assist communities and rural areas in identifying and evaluating solutions to water or wastewater problems, improving facility operation and maintenance activities, or preparing funding applications for water or wastewater treatment facility construction projects.

**Eligibility:**

- Eligibility for grant funding is restricted to private, nonprofit organizations that have been granted tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service. Eligible organizations must then demonstrate the ability, background, experience, legal authority, and actual capacity to provide technical assistance/training on a regional basis to small, rural communities.

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## 15) Rural Water Circuit Rider Program

- The objective of this program is to bring small public water systems into compliance with state and national environmental regulations. The program provides on-site technical assistance for the operation of rural water systems. This program is congruous with RUS loan supervision responsibilities. In each state this service is provided through RUS contracts with the National Rural Water Association (NRWA) .

### **Additional Information:**

- The RUS program is administered by State Water associations. RUS has a management contract with National Rural Water Association which contracts with state water associations. (This makes no sense)

### **Eligibility:**

- Public water and waste water systems in rural communities with populations of 10,000 or less are eligible. In many states funding for very small communities has been further prioritized.

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## Section IV

### USDA Office of Community Development

The USDA rural development mission area includes the Office of Community Development (OCD). Through USDA Rural Development's field offices, OCD provides support for rural development. The office implements a range of special rural development initiatives such as the Rural Community Development Initiative and the Economic Impact Initiative. Additionally, it disseminates information about rural development strategies to rural development practitioners, and promotes communication and networking among rural development experts. OCD provides leadership and administrative oversight to two major programs: the Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community Initiative and the Rural Economic Area Partnership Zones program.

#### **1) Rural Economic Area Partnership Zones (REAP)**

- This is a pilot program that assists rural communities suffering from out-migration, economic crises, and geographic isolation. Zones that are designated REAP receive modest technical and financial assistance from USDA as well as other federal agencies.

##### **Additional Information:**

- These zones also receive special consideration and preferences under regular Rural Development loan and grant programs. Just as with EZ/EC programs, REAP zones engage in community-based, long-term planning. They report on their progress with regularity, using OCD's performance and benchmark reporting system. There are currently five REAP zones.
- The two original zones in North Dakota were created in 1995. Two zones were added in upstate New York in 1999 and 2000 respectively. A final zone was designated in Vermont later on in 2000.

##### **Eligibility:**

- Designation by the Secretary as a REAP Zone.

##### **Contact:**

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Website: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/cdp.html>

## 2) National Rural Development Partnership

- The 2002 farm bill authorized the National Rural Development Partnership (NRDP). It is the responsibility of the NRDP to coordinate the efforts of public, private, and nonprofit groups interested in rural development issues. The most prominent operative agents are the State Rural Development Councils, which are present in 36 states. Also included in the Partnership is the National Partnership Office which is affiliated with both the USDA and National Rural Development Council. The latter is comprised of senior program managers from 40 federal agencies involved with rural development activities as well as national representatives of public interest and private sector organizations.

### **Additional Information:**

- State rural development offices provide matching funding to support partnership activities with State Rural Development Partnership Councils.

### **Eligibility:**

- State Rural Development Partnership Councils are composed of broadly representative public and private organizations.

### **Contact:**

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## Section V

# USDA Conservation and Specialty Crop Grant Programs

Specialty crops are a major part of U.S. agriculture and keeping this industry competitive is critical. Through this program, the USDA has created an objective to ensure that agriculture thrives. Specialty crops are defined as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, nursery crops, including floriculture. Each of these crops is essential to maintain a healthy diet and an active life. Through each of these programs, I am confident that we will conserve and protect our farmlands that are the grounds to produce these crops.

### 1) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

- The CRP program is voluntary. Producers may enter into a contract ranging from 10-15 year in duration. These contracts provide annual rental payments and financial assistance to undertake certain conservation practices. An example of such a project is the conversion of highly erodible and other environmentally sensitive acreage to long-term vegetative cover with the intention of improving the soil and water and wildlife resources.

#### Additional Information:

- In addition, there are several CRP subprograms encouraging specific conservation practices that protect environmentally sensitive land, decrease erosion, restore wildlife habitat, and safeguard ground and surface water.
- Amount:
  - Rental Payments - The maximum CRP rental rate for each offer is calculated in advance of enrollment.
  - Maintenance Incentive Payments - CRP annual rental payments may include an additional amount up to \$4 per acre per year as an incentive to perform certain maintenance obligations.
  - Cost-share Assistance - FSA provides cost-share assistance to participants who establish approved cover on eligible cropland. The cost-share assistance will not be more than 50 percent of participants' costs.
  - Other Incentives - FSA may offer additional financial incentives of up to 20 percent of the annual payment for certain continuous sign-up practices.

#### Eligibility:

- Wetlands that have been cropped three of the immediately preceding 10 crop years; land on which a constructed wetland is to be developed to manage fertilizer runoff; and land that has been devoted to commercial pond-raised aquaculture are all eligible.

**Contact:**

- Point of Contact: Patricia Engler, National Program Manager  
Telephone: 202-720-1836  
Website: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CRP/>

## 2) Wetlands Reserve Program

- The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) supports landowners wishing to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands on their property. This is done through long-term technical and financial assistance.

**Additional Information:**

- WRP offers three types of grants:
  - *Permanent Easement* is a conservation easement in perpetuity.
  - *30-Year Easement* is an easement that expires after 30 years.
  - *Restoration Cost-Share Agreement* is an agreement to restore or enhance the wetland functions and values without placing an easement on the enrolled acres. USDA pays up to 75% of the restoration costs.
- There are three payment methods:
  - Permanent Easements: USDA pays 100% of easement value/restoration costs.
  - 30- Year Easements: USDA pays up to 75% of the easement value and up to 75% of the restoration costs.
  - Restoration Cost-Share Agreement: USDA pays up to 75% of restoration costs.

**Eligibility:**

- Eligibility is open to certain types of private and tribal wetlands, croplands, and grasslands, as well as lands that meet the habitat need of specific wildlife species.

**Contact:**

- Point of Contact: David Howard  
Telephone: 202-720-1067  
Website: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Programs/WRP/>

## 3) Grasslands Reserve Program (GRP)

- GRP is a voluntary program. It is administered by USDA's Farm Services Agency (FSA). The program aims to help landowners restore and protect grassland, rangeland, pastureland, and shrub land and provides assistance for rehabilitating grasslands.

**Additional Information:**

- Participants have the option of choosing a 10 year, 15 year, or 20 year contract.
- Amount:
  - *Rental Contract.* USDA will provide annual payments in an amount that is not more than 75% of grazing value with payments not exceeding \$50,000 per year per person or legal entity.
  - *Permanent Easement.* T. Easement compensation will not exceed fair market value, less the grazing value of the land encumbered by the easement.
  - *Restoration Agreement.* Certain grassland easements or rental contracts may be eligible for cost-share assistance up to 50 percent of the cost to re-establish grassland functions and values. Payments will not exceed \$50,000 per year per person or legal entity

**Eligibility:**

- Landowners and operators who have general control of the acreage (for rental contracts), landowners who can provide clear title on privately owned lands (for easements), and tribes are all eligible for participation in the program.

**Contact:**

- Point of Contact: Elizabeth Crane, NRCS National Program Manager  
Telephone: 202-720-0242  
Second Point of Contact: Jim Williams, FSA Contact  
Telephone: 202-720-9562  
Website: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/grp/>

#### 4) Farmland Protection Program

- FFP provides matching funds to help eligible farmlands purchase development rights to keep productive farm and rangeland in use in an agricultural capacity. This is accomplished by limiting nonagricultural uses and including lands that promote state and local farmland protection.

**Additional Information:**

- USDA partners with state, tribal, or local governments and nongovernmental organizations to acquire conservation easements or other interests in land from landowners, and provides up to 50% of the fair market easement value of the conservation easement.
- FRPP share of the easement cost must not exceed 50% of the appraised fair market value. As a minimum, a cooperating entity must provide 25% of the appraised fair market value or 50% of the purchase price of the conservation easement.

**Eligibility:**

- The federal share of easement costs are capped at 50%, with the land owner contributing 25% of the costs. The program is also restructured to emphasize longer term and renewable cooperative agreements.

**Contact:**

- Point of Contact: Robert Glennon, National FRPP Manager  
Telephone: 202-720-9476  
Website: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/frpp/>

## 5) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- Farmers and ranchers promoting agricultural production and environmental quality can receive technical and cost-share assistance from EQIP. EQIP supports the installation or implementation of structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land.

**Additional Information:**

- Funding is limited to \$300,000 in any 6-year period per entity, except in cases of special environmental significance including projects involving methane digesters, as determined by USDA. Projects with organic production benefits are capped at \$20,000 annually or \$80,000 in any six-year period.

**Eligibility:**

- Covered under the program are practices that enhance soil, surface and ground water, air quality, and conserve energy; it also covers grazing land, forestland, wetlands, and other types of land and natural resources that support wildlife.

**Contact:**

- Point of Contact: Tim Beard, EQIP Program Manager  
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Second Point of Contact: Edward Brzostek, EQIP Specialist  
Telephone: 202-720-1834  
Website: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/PROGRAMS/EQIP/>

## 6) Conservation Stewardship Program

- The Conservation Stewardship Program provides financial and technical assistance to promote the conservation and improvement of soil, water, air, energy, plant and animal life, and other conservation purposes on tribal and private working lands.

**Additional Information:**

- CSP contracts require that participants meet or exceed a stewardship threshold. This refers to the level of resource conservation and environmental management required to improve and conserve the quality and condition of at least one resource concern.

**Eligibility**

- It is divided into three tiers:
  - Tier I: The producer must have addressed soil quality and water quality to the described minimum level of treatment for eligible land uses prior to acceptance. This tier has a maximum payment is \$20,000 annually.
  - Tier II: the producer must have addressed soil quality and water quality to the described minimum level of treatment on all eligible land uses on the entire agricultural operation prior to acceptance and agree to address one additional resource by the end of the contract period. Tier II has a maximum payment of \$35,000 annually.
  - Tier III: The producer must have addressed all applicable resource concerns to NRCS Field Office Technical Guide standards and have riparian zones adequately treated. This tier has a maximum payment of \$45,000 annually.

**Contact**

- Website: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CSP/>

## 7) Wildlife Habitat Incentives Programs

- WHIP is a voluntary program intended to develop and improve habitat primarily on private land. Through WHIP, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service provides both technical assistance and up to 75% cost-share assistance to establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat.

**Additional Information:**

- The terms of WHIP agreements between NRCS and the participant generally are from 5 to 10 years from the date the agreement is signed.
- NRCS will pay up to 75 percent of the cost to install conservation practices for permanent priority fish and wildlife habitat.
- NRCS will pay up to 90 percent of the cost to install conservation practices in long-term agreements.

**Eligibility:**

- Private agricultural land suitable for fish and wildlife habitat development; non-industrial private forest land, and tribal land.

**Contact:**

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Website: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Programs/whip/>

## 8) Agricultural Management Assistance

- Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) provides agricultural producers with cost-share and incentive payments so that they may voluntarily address issues, such as water management, water quality, and erosion control by incorporating conservation practices into their farming operations.

**Additional Information:**

- Incentive payments may be made as a means of inducing producers to perform land management practices. Only after an approved practice has been certified and verified are participants paid. The Federal cost-share rate is 75% of the cost of an eligible practice, based on the percent of actual cost, or percent of actual cost with not-to-exceed limits, or flat rates. Total AMA payments shall not exceed \$50,000 per participant for any fiscal year.

**Eligibility:**

- 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: cropland, hay land, pasture and rangeland, land used for subsistence purpose, and other land (such as forestland) that produces crops or livestock where risk may be mitigated through diversification or conservation.

**Contact:**

- Point of Contact: Dave Mason, National Program Manager  
Telephone: 202-720-1873  
Website: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/AMA/index.html>

## 9) Watershed Programs

### *Watershed Rehabilitation Program*

- In 200 Congress authorized the Watershed Rehabilitation Program. This program is intended to restore and repair many of the small watershed structures that were reaching or have exceeded their design life. In FY2007, 775 watershed dams previously built with NRCS

assistance reached the end of their designated life span. By 2015, USDA estimates this number will exceed 4,300.

**Additional Information:**

- All projects must have a local sponsor to request federal assistance.
- It is not necessary for a national emergency to be declared for an area to be eligible for assistance.

**Eligibility:**

- Only dams that were constructed under the following USDA assisted water resource programs qualify for rehabilitation assistance:
  - Watershed Program
  - Pilot Watershed Program (1952-1954), and
  - Resource Conservation and Development Program.

**Contact:**

- Point of Contact: Stuart Simpson, National Watershed Rehabilitation Manager  
Telephone: (202) 720-3413  
Website: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/wsrehab/>

***Emergency Watershed Program (EWP)***

- The NRCS administers this program. The EWP provides emergency financial and technical assistance during flood, drought, and erosion caused by fire, flood, or any other natural occurrence creating a sudden impairment of the watershed.

**Additional Information:**

- NRCS partners with local sponsors to share up to 75% of the cost to remove debris from streams, protect destabilized stream banks, establish cover on critically eroding lands, repair conservation practices, and purchase floodplain easements.

**Eligibility:**

- Public and private landowners are eligible for assistance but must be represented by a project sponsor. The project sponsor must be a public agency of state, county, or city government, or a special district or tribal government.

**Contact:**

- Point of Contact: Fred Reaves, National EWP Program Leader  
Telephone: (202) 690-0793  
Website: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/EWP/questions.html>

## 10) Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)

- This program is administered by the FSA. The ECP provides emergency financial and technical assistance for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters. It also carries out emergency water conservation measures in periods of severe drought.

### **Additional Information:**

- Conservation problems existing prior to the applicable disaster are ineligible for ECP assistance.

### **Eligibility:**

- Land eligibility is determined by County FSA committees based on on-site inspections of damage. This considered both the type and extent of damage. For land to be eligible, the natural disaster must create new conservation problems that, if 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; and
  - Be so costly to repair that Federal assistance is or will be required to return the land to productive agricultural use.

### **Contact:**

- Point of Contact: Mary Helen Askins, Legislative Affairs Staff  
Telephone: (202) 720-7961  
Second Point of Contact: Michele Proctor, Legislative Affairs Staff  
Telephone: (202) 720-5875  
Fax: (202) 720-2979  
To find your state office visit:  
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/stateOffices?area=stoffice&subject=landing&topic=landing>  
Website: <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov> or  
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=copr&topic=ecp>

## 11) Conversion Technical Assistance (CTA)

- A landowner can request Technical assistance and professional advice on how to design, install, and maintain land management, vegetative, and structural practices that provide conservation benefits. Technical assistance is provided and funded within most conservation programs. Most funding for technical assistance is provided through NRCS' conservation programs, the largest of which is Conservation Operations. CO provides technical assistance through the Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) program.

**Additional Information:**

- CTA provides technical support, conservation planning, and implementation assistance through local field offices in almost every county in the United States (and territories).

**Eligibility:**

- All owners, managers, and others that have a stake and interest in natural resource management are eligible to receive technical assistance from NRCS.

**Contact:**

- Point of Contact: James Johnson, Acting CTA Team Leader  
Telephone: (202) 690-5988  
Website: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cta/>

## 12) Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

- The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) is to solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Specialty crops are defined as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture).

**Additional Information:**

- The minimum base grant each State is eligible to receive is equal to the higher of \$100,000 or 1/3 of 1 percent of the total amount of funding made available for that fiscal year.
- In addition, AMS will allocate the remainder of the grant funds based on the value of specialty crop production in each state in relation to the national value of specialty crop production using the latest available cash receipt data.

**Eligibility:**

- The agency, commission, or department responsible for agriculture within the 50 States.

**Contact Information:**

- Mr. Jimmie Turner  
Telephone: (202) 720-8998  
Email: [jimmie.turner@usda.gov](mailto:jimmie.turner@usda.gov)

## Section VI

### Renewable Energy Programs for Farmers

#### **1) Notice of Contract Proposal (NOCP) for Payments to Eligible Advanced Biofuel Producers**

- The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 authorized this program, which is designed to support Federal policy calling for greater production and use of Advanced Biofuels.

##### **Additional Information:**

- Application materials can be obtained through the USDA, Rural Development State Office Renewable Energy Coordinator. Completed applications should be submitted to the Rural Development State Office of the State wherein the applicant's principal office is located.

##### **Eligibility:**

- Eligible Advanced Biofuel Producers will receive payments for their production of fuels derived from renewable biomasses other than corn kernel starch. These may include:
  - Biofuel derived from cellulose, hemicellulose, or lignin;
  - Biofuel derived from sugar and starch (other than Ethanol derived from corn kernel starch);
  - Biofuel derived from waste material, including crop residue, other vegetative waste material, animal waste, food waste and yard waste;
  - diesel-equivalent fuel derived from Renewable Biomass, including vegetable oil and animal fat;
  - Biogas (including landfill gas and sewage waste treatment gas) produced through the conversion of organic matter from Renewable Biomass;

##### **Contact:**

- Point of Contact: Thomas Hauryski, USDA Rural Development  
Telephone: (607) 776-7398 Ext. 132  
Email: [Thomas.Hauryski@ny.usda.gov](mailto:Thomas.Hauryski@ny.usda.gov)  
Website: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/busp/9005Biofuels.htm>  
415 West Morris Street,  
Bath, NY 14810

## 2) High Energy Cost Grants

- This is series of competitive grants that provides financial assistance for a broad range of energy facilities, equipment, and related activities to offset the impacts of high residential energy costs in eligible communities. Eligible facilities include on-grid and off-grid renewable energy systems and implementation of cost-effective demand side management and energy conservation programs that benefit eligible communities.

### **Additional Information:**

- No cost sharing or matching funds are required to be eligible for this grant program. RUS will consider what other financial resources are available to the grantee as well as any voluntary commitment of matching funds or other contributions when assessing the grantee's capacity to carry out the grant program successfully and will award additional evaluation points to proposals that include such contributions. As a further condition of each grant, Section 19(b) (2) of the RE Act requires that planning and administrative expenses may not exceed 4 percent of the grant funds.

### **Eligibility:**

- Areas with high energy costs, i.e. areas in which the average residential expenditure for home energy is 275% of the national average.

### **Contact:**

- Point of Contact: Jill Harvey, Acting New York State Director  
Telephone: (315) 477-6409  
Fax: (315) 477-6438  
Email: [scott.collins@ny.usda.gov](mailto:scott.collins@ny.usda.gov)  
Website: <http://www.usda.gov/rus/>

## 3) Biomass Crop Assistance Program for (BCAP)

- The Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP) offers financial assistance to producers that deliver eligible biomass material to designated biomass conversion facilities for use as heat, power, biobased products or biofuels.

### **Additional Information:**

- This grant helps eligible producers and entities meet costs relating to the collection, harvest, storage and transportation of biomass materials.

### **Eligibility:**

- Producers or entities will be eligible for up to a dollar per dollar match, up to \$45 per dry ton, for the value of the biomass that is delivered to a designated biomass conversion facility. Producers will be eligible for up to two years of such payments.

**Contact:**

- Point of Contact: Mary Helen Askins, Legislative Affairs Staff  
Telephone: (202) 720-7961  
Second Point of Contact: Michele Proctor, Legislative Affairs Staff  
Telephone: (202) 720-5875  
Fax: (202) 720-2979  
To find your state office visit:  
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/stateOffices?area=stoffice&subject=landing&topic=landing>  
Website: <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov> or  
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=ener&topic=bcap>

#### 4) Biorefinery Assistance Program

- This program seeks to stimulate the development of new and emerging technologies for the development of advanced biofuels in order to increase the energy independence of the United States, to promote increased resource conservation and better public and environmental health, to diversify markets for agricultural and forestry products and agriculture waste material, and to create jobs and enhance the economic development of the rural economy.

**Additional Information:**

- The program offers loan guarantees to fund the development, construction, and retrofitting of commercial-scale biorefineries that use eligible technology.

**Eligibility:**

- Any technology that is being adopted for use by a viable commercial-scale operation of a biorefinery that produces an advanced biofuel and that has been demonstrated to have technical and economic potential for commercial application in such a facility.

**Contact:**

- Department of Agriculture, Rural Development,  
Business Programs, Energy Branch  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW, MS3225  
Washington, DC 20250-3225  
Telephone: (202) 720-1400

## Section VII

### Letters of Support from Senator Gillibrand

While Senator Gillibrand does NOT decide which organizations are awarded grants, there are instances in which it is appropriate for the Senator Gillibrand to write a letter of support for an application. If you wish to request a letter of support for your application, you must supply Senator Gillibrand with the following:

1. A description of your organization,
2. Summary of the application,
3. a description of what the money will be used for, and
4. a draft letter of support

Please forward this information to the nearest regional office:

#### **Capital District**

Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand  
Leo W. O'Brien Federal Office Building  
1 Clinton Square  
Room 821  
Albany, NY 12207  
Tel: (518) 431-0120  
Fax: (518) 431-0128

#### **Buffalo/Western New York**

Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand  
Larkin at Exchange  
726 Exchange Street, Suite 511  
Buffalo, NY 14210  
Tel: (716) 854-9725  
Fax: (716) 854-9731

#### **Long Island**

Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand  
155 Pinelawn Road  
Suite 250 North  
Melville, NY 11747  
Tel: (631) 249-2825  
Fax: (631) 249-2847

#### **New York City**

Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand  
780 Third Avenue  
Suite 2601  
New York, New York 10017  
Tel. (212) 688-6262  
Fax (212) 688-7444

#### **North Country**

Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand  
PO Box 273  
Lowville, NY 13367  
Tel. (315) 376-6118  
Fax (315) 376-6118

#### **Rochester Region**

Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand  
Kenneth B. Keating Federal Office  
Building  
100 State Street  
Room 4195  
Rochester, NY 14614  
Tel. (585) 263-6250  
Fax (585) 263-6247

**Syracuse/Central New York**

Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand  
James M. Hanley Federal Building  
100 South Clinton Street  
Room 1470  
PO Box 7378

**Westchester County**

Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand  
Tel. (914) 725-9294  
Fax (914) 472-5073

**Washington D.C.**

Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand  
United States Senate  
478 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
Tel. (202) 224-4451  
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