**AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION AND RELATED AGENCIES**

**FY 2025 COMMUNITY PROJECT FUNDING APPLICATION**

Please identify which of the six eligible accounts under the Agriculture appropriations bill your organization is applying for.*(Note: Applicants may only select ONE account. For more information on these accounts,* ***please see the descriptions at the end of the application****.)*

* Agricultural Research Service, Buildings and Facilities
* Natural Resources Conservation Service, Conservation Operations
* Rural Development, Rural Housing Service, Community Facility Grants
* Rural Development, Rural Utilities Service, ReConnect Grants
* Rural Development, Rural Utilities Service, Water and Waste Grants
* Rural Development, Rural Utilities Service, Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grants

To ensure your projects meet eligibility requirements for the Rural Development and Natural Resources Conservation Service accounts, you must consult with your respective State Rural Development or State Conservation office which can be found here:

* Rural Development: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/about-rd/state-offices>
* Natural Resources Conservation Services: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservationbasics/conservation-by-state/state-offices>

Has your organization consulted with the State Rural Development or State Conservation office to confirm your project application meets the respective project eligibility requirements? *(Note – applicants* ***MUST*** *consult with their respective State Rural Development or State Conservation*

*Office prior to submission.)*

* YES
* NO

**Please provide the following information.**

1. Requesting Entity (Legal Title):
2. Full Address (Please write on one line):
3. Requesting Entity Staff Contact Information
   1. Name:
   2. Title:
   3. Business Phone:
   4. Cell Phone:
   5. Email:
4. Project Name:
5. Funding Amount Requested:
6. Have you submitted this request with another office? If so, please identify which office.
7. Total Cost of Project and breakdown of funding sources (Detail all local, state and/or private funds. Are these funds secured, expected, or you are still seeking?):
8. The website address of the proposed recipient.
9. Has the recipient secured all necessary funds to complete the project, including non-federal cost share requirements?
10. For Rural Development projects, is the project for an eligible purpose and does it meet all eligibility requirements under current law?
11. Does the entity plan to make grants to other entities from the funds provided and, if so, to whom?
12. Why is the project a priority for the district? Briefly explain the community benefits.
13. Has any funding for the project been included in any presidential budget and, if so, how much, in which fiscal year, and in which agency or agencies and program(s)?
14. Has the project received Federal funding before and, if so, how much, when, and from which agency or agencies and program(s)?
15. Have you contacted the State Rural Development Office/State Conservation Office to discuss the project and confirm eligibility?
16. For Rural Development projects: is the project for an eligible purpose and does it meet all eligibility requirements, with the exception of any Median Household Income requirements, under current law?
17. For ARS B&F only: what is the estimated start date of the project? How soon could the feasibility/engineering design phase commence? [mm/yy]
18. For ARS B&F only: does the project have distinct and separable phases?
19. For ARS B&F only: what is the estimated completion date of the project? When does completion of construction occur? [mm/yy]
20. For ARS B&F only: have you verified that this facility is owned or operated by the Agricultural Research Service?
21. For ReConnect requests only: please provide relevant information, such as the number of households, businesses, or farms that would be served, what the performance of the service to be offered will be, and whether healthcare or educational facilities will be served.
22. For Conservation Operations requests only: briefly describe how the project will reduce soil erosion, enhance water supplies, improve water quality, increase wildlife habitat, or other objectives that will help conserve, maintain, and improve natural resources.
23. For Water and Waste requests only: provide relevant information, such as the number of households, businesses, or farms that would be served.

**Guidance on Eligible Accounts for Community Project Funding FY25 Applications**

Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration,

and Related Agencies

***Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Community Facilities Grants***

Grants to purchase, construct, or improve essential community facilities, to purchase equipment, and pay other related project expenses. Examples of eligible projects include but are not limited to: medical or dental clinics, healthcare facilities, police or fire departments, and public works vehicles.

Project requests for non-essential facilities such as community gardens or museums will not be considered. Priority will be given to essential projects, such as those focused on public health and safety.

Any project must serve a rural area as specified in 7 CFR 3570.53 (rural areas including cities, villages, townships and Federally Recognized Tribal lands with no more than 20,000 residents).

The Member’s request must demonstrate community support. Members should ensure that their request provides the most complete description of the project as possible. Submissions should include details on all proposed use of funds, activities that will occur, timeline, and detailed information on the complete service territory. Such requests are also subject to cost share requirements specified in 7 CFR 3570.63(b). Please review program regulations carefully. In-kind contributions and other Federal formula or grant resources cannot be counted towards match requirements.

Community Facilities grants cannot be used to pay initial operating expenses or annual recurring expenses, refinance existing debt, pay interest, build or repair facilities in non-rural areas, or pay for construction costs of facilities that will be used for commercial rental space.

The State Rural Development Office is a valuable resource to answer program questions, including eligibility and non-federal cost share requirements. For fiscal year 2024, the average Community Facilities CPF award was about $1.2 million.

***Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, ReConnect Program***

ReConnect broadband pilot grants facilitate broadband deployment in rural areas. Grant funds can be used for the costs of construction, improvement, or acquisition of facilities and equipment needed to

provide broadband service to rural areas without sufficient broadband access, defined as 25 Mbps downstream and 3 Mbps upstream.

The area must be rural and lack sufficient access to broadband service. A rural area is any area which is not located within a city, town, or incorporated area that has a population of greater than 20,000 inhabitants. Sufficient access to broadband is defined as greater than 90% of any rural area in which households have fixed, terrestrial broadband service delivering at least 25 Mbps downstream and 3 Mbps upstream. Mobile and satellite services will not be considered in making the determination of sufficient access to broadband.

Stand-alone middle-mile projects are not eligible under the ReConnect Program. However, middle-mile

facilities are eligible if they are needed to bring sufficient broadband service to all premises in the area.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to include information in their requests, such as the number of

households, businesses, or farms will be served in the area, what the performance of the service to be

offered will be, and whether health care or educational facilities will be served.

Additionally, when submitting a request, applicants are reminded that all policies and procedures apply,

including environmental and related reviews and the non-federal cost share requirement of 25% of the

overall project cost. Policies and procedures can be found at <https://go.usa.gov/xexPT>.

USDA’s Rural Development office is a valuable resource to answer program questions, including eligibility. For fiscal year 2023, the average ReConnect CPF award was nearly $1.2 million.

***Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grants***

The Distance Learning and Telemedicine program (DLT) helps rural residents better utilize the enormous

potential of modern telecommunications and the internet for education and healthcare, two critical

components of economic and community development. The DLT program helps rural communities acquire the technology and training necessary to connect educational and medical professionals with

students, teachers, and patients in rural areas.

Grants may be used for audio and video equipment, broadband facilities that support distance learning or telemedicine (not actual broadband), computer hardware or network components/software, and acquisition of instructional programing.

Any requests are subject to all regulations governing the program which can be found at 7 CFR Part 1734.

The program requires a 15% match that cannot come from another Federal source. Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide as much detail as possible on how the award will be utilized, what equipment of service will be acquired and any information on population(s) served. The program is intended to serve rural areas with populations of 20,000 or less.

The State Rural Development Office is a valuable resource to answer program questions, including eligibility.

***Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Waste Disposal Grants***

The Water and Waste Disposal Grant Program may be used to finance the acquisition, construction or

improvement of drinking water sourcing, treatment, storage and disposal; sewer collection, transmission, treatment and disposal; solid waste collection, disposal and closure; and storm water collection, transmission, and closure.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide details on the number of households and businesses serve and details of the exact work to be completed.

Eligible entities include rural areas and towns with population of 10,000 or less and Tribal lands in rural areas. The account has not been subject to CPFs in the previous years. Potential recipients will be required to provide a 25% non-federal cost share.

The State Rural Development Office is a valuable resource to answer program questions, including eligibility.

***Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, Buildings and Facilities***

The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) owns and operates laboratories and facilities across the United States. Many of these laboratories/facilities are decades old, have outlived their functional lifespan, and

are badly in need of major repairs, renovation, or replacement. Requests can assist in the acquisition of

land, construction, repair, improvement, extension, alteration, and purchase of fixed equipment or facilities as necessary to carry out the agricultural research programs of the Department of Agriculture.

Facility requests must be for ARS-owned facilities or for facilities that are already partnering with ARS. Requested funding for new facilities that do not have an existing ARS tie will **not** be considered.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide details on the research to be conducted, why the research is a high priority, as well as details on the modernization and why it is critical in carrying out the research.

***Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Conservation Operations***

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) supports private landowners, conservation districts,

and other organizations to conserve, maintain, and improve the Nation’s natural resources. Examples of

specific objectives include reducing soil erosion, improving soil health, enhancing water supplies,

improving water quality, increasing wildlife habitat, and reducing damage caused by floods and other natural disasters.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide details on the work to be done, including if the project will conduct surveys, investigations, or research, and if there is a plan to publish the results of any such work.

Applicants should also describe any preventive measures to be taken, such as engineering operations,

methods of cultivation, or changes in use of land.

For FY25, the Subcommittee will only consider projects for funding recipients that are State, local, and Tribal organizations, or conservation districts. Non-profit recipients will not be considered.

The State Conservationist is a valuable resource to answer program questions, including eligibility. House CPFs in the account averaged about $1.3 million in FY24.