



Funder Briefing

United States Department of Agriculture - Rural Development

“committed to the future of rural communities”

The New York state office of the USDA Rural Development agency is located in Syracuse. [Ten regional offices](#) provide support for rural development to the 62 counties of New York State. Rural Development was once part of the FmHA, which was split in 1995 into two parts: Farm Service Agency and Rural Development.

USDA's Rural Development agency partners with federal, state and local organizations to provide loan guarantees, support single family and multi-unit housing and landlords, and makes grants and loans to nonprofits and community facilities essential for public use in rural areas. The term "rural" has almost as many definitions in the federal government as there are programs. All the definitions are based on population density and current census tract information.

PROGRAMS OF INTEREST TO FUNDERS

[Community and Economic Development Programs](#) - Assists communities and regions in creating self-sustaining, long-term economic and community development in rural areas through visioning and strategic planning, and promotes partnerships at the local and state levels to assist communities in advancing their strategic or economic development plans.

[Rural Community Development Initiative](#) - provides technical assistance and training funds to qualified intermediary organizations to develop their capacity to undertake housing, community facilities, and community and economic development projects in rural areas.

[Community Facilities Loans and Grants](#) - for projects to develop essential community facilities for public use in rural areas (with a population of 20,000 or less) and may include hospitals, clinics, fire/rescue, public safety, as well as, many other community-based initiatives like museums, libraries, schools and community centers.

[Rural Business Opportunity Grants](#) - The RBOG program promotes sustainable economic development in rural communities with exceptional needs through provision of training and technical assistance for business development, entrepreneurs, and economic development officials, and to assist with economic development planning. For other Rural Development Programs, please visit [Programs & Opportunities](#).

[Multi-Family Housing Program](#) - USDA Rural Development's Multi-Family Housing program supports the construction and maintenance of rural rental housing for the elderly, the disabled and low-to-moderate income families. Persons with disabilities are also eligible. The program provides low-interest loans to developers of rural rental property and oversees the management of complexes it finances. For the location of these multi-family housing complexes, please visit http://rdmfhrentals.sc.egov.usda.gov/RDMFHRentals/select_state.jsp

GRANT EXAMPLE

A grant from USDA Rural Development helped to establish the [New York State Farmworker Telehealth and Learning Network](#) to provide more than basic health care to migrant workers. The grant funded telemedicine equipment for thirteen rural healthcare clinics in the Finger Lakes region, giving residents and health care professionals access and real-time telemedicine consultation with other health professionals, specialists, and educational resources at five different hub sites.

What Can Funders Do? Invite the regional office directors to the table when discussing economic development or new opportunities for community development. Get to know them as potential partners to bring new resources and funding to your communities.

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