

# PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **USDA Seeks Applications for Value-Added Producer Grants**

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that USDA is accepting applications for up to \$18 million in grants to help agricultural producers enter into value-added activities.

“These grants strengthen rural economies and create jobs by helping farmers and ranchers expand existing markets as well as develop new uses for existing agricultural products, including biobased materials, green chemicals and functional foods—those foods that are specially formulated to provide health benefits..” Vilsack said. “This program also supports President Obama’s goal to expand our nation’s renewable energy resources.”

Planning grants up to \$100,000 and working capital grants up to \$300,000 will be awarded through USDA Rural Development’s Value Added Producer Grant program. USDA is encouraging projects that use existing agricultural products in nontraditional ways and/or merge agricultural products with technology in creative ways.

Businesses of all sizes may apply, but priority will be given to operators of Small and Medium-Sized Family Farms or Ranches with a 3-year average of \$500,000 or less in annual gross sales of agricultural product. The competitive grants to be awarded under this notice are part of USDA Rural Development’s annual budget and are not funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

Applicants must provide matching funds equal to the amount of the grant requested. Ten percent of available funds are reserved for beginning farmers or ranchers, and socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers. An additional 10 percent is reserved for projects involving local and regional supply networks that link independent producers with businesses and cooperatives that market value-added products.

Paper and electronic applications for both unreserved and reserved funds must be submitted to the Rural Development state office for MA, CT and RI in Amherst, MA (USDA Rural Development, 451 West Street, Suite 2, Amherst, MA 01002. Attention: Dick Burke). Electronic applications must be submitted through [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov). Paper applications for unreserved funds must be postmarked and mailed, shipped, or sent overnight no later than

July 6, 2009, to be eligible for FY 2009 grant funding. Paper applications for reserved funds must be postmarked and mailed, shipped, or sent overnight no later than June 22, 2009 to be eligible for FY 2009 grant funding. Late applications are not eligible for FY 2009 grant funding. Electronic applications for unreserved funds must be received by July 6, 2009, to be eligible for FY 2009 grant funding. Electronic applications for reserved funds must be received no later than June 22, 2009, to be eligible for FY 2009 grant funding. Late applications are not eligible for FY 2009 grant funding.

Applicants in Bristol, Norfolk, Plymouth, Dukes, Nantucket and Barnstable Counties should contact Anne Correia at: (508) 295-5151, extension 3 or email: [anne.correia@ma.usda.gov](mailto:anne.correia@ma.usda.gov) with questions and/or application assistance.

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