



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20250-0700
Phone: (202) 260-0996 • Fax: (202) 720-0483 TDD: (202) 720-6382 • Web: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>

Contact:
Jay Fletcher (202) 690-0498

USDA SEEKS APPLICATIONS FROM NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS FOR HOUSEHOLD WATER WELL SYSTEM GRANTS

WASHINGTON, November 21, 2008 – USDA Rural Development Under Secretary Thomas C. Dorr today announced that qualifying non-profit organizations may now submit funding applications for the Household Water Well System Grant program.

“This program provides financial assistance through non-profit organizations to rural residents who need to drill water wells,” Dorr said. “Because many rural residents do not live in areas where a centralized water system is feasible, this program helps meet a basic human need: access to clean, safe drinking water.”

Grants may be made available to qualified non-profit organizations to establish lending programs for household water wells. USDA does *not* provide funds directly to property owners under this program. Non-profit organizations must use the grants to make loans to individual homeowners to construct or upgrade household water well systems. The non-profit groups must contribute at least 10 percent of the grant request to capitalize the loan fund.

USDA Rural Development is issuing this notice prior to passage of a final appropriations bill, which may or may not provide funding for this program, to allow applicants sufficient time to leverage financing and submit applications. In recent years the amount available for this program on a nationwide basis has been under \$1 million per year.

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To file a complaint of discrimination write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

The deadline for completed applications is May 31, 2009. The published Notice and application guide may be obtained electronically through <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/>. Call (202) 720-9583 to request paper copies of application guides and materials. For additional information, see the November 20 Federal Register, page 70315, <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/pdf/E8-27586.pdf>.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. Rural Development has invested more than \$111 billion since 2001 for equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. More than 2 million jobs have been created or saved through these investments. Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA Rural Development's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.