



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development
1606 Perry St, Suite E, Yakima, WA 98902
Contact: Chris Cassidy, Program Director, Rural Business-Cooperative Service
(509) 454-5743 or chris.cassidy@wa.usda.gov

May 7, 2003

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT ANNOUNCES THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDING FOR RURAL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY GRANTS

Olympia---USDA Rural Development is pleased to announce that they are now accepting applications for the Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG) Program. The primary objective of the program is to improve the economic conditions of rural areas.

Entities eligible for the grants are public bodies, non-profit corporations, Federally-recognized Indian Tribes and cooperatives with members that are primarily rural residents and that conduct activities for the mutual benefit of the members. Private, for-profit businesses are not eligible. Eligible areas are incorporated communities of 10,000 or less according to the latest decennial census.

Grants must be used to provide technical assistance for business development and conduct planning for sustainable economic development in rural areas. Examples of eligible grant purposes include, but are not limited to, the following: Identify and analyze business opportunities that will use local rural materials or human resources; Identify, train and provide technical assistance to existing or prospective rural entrepreneurs; Establish business support centers; conduct local community or multi-county economic development planning; Establish centers for training, technology, and trade that will provide training for rural businesses. Grant funds may not be used to duplicate current services or pay costs to acquire real estate or complete building construction.

Applications will be accepted until the close of business on June 2, 2003. The maximum request for each grant is limited to \$50,000, unless it is a multi-state project where the funds may not exceed \$150,000, and awards are made nationally on a competitive basis using specific selection criteria. Additional funding is also available nationally for projects located in rural Enterprise Communities, and for Native American Tribes. Our state has two Enterprise Communities, the Lower Yakima County Rural Enterprise Community and the Five Star Enterprise Community located in northeast Washington.

For more details regarding the program or to obtain an application, please contact the nearest Rural Development Business Loan Specialist:

- Clint Kaasa 1835 Black Lake Blvd SW, Suite C, Olympia, WA 98512, or call (360) 704-7762
- Dan McNeley 1606 Perry St., Suite E, Yakima, WA 98902, or call (509) 454-5743 – Ext. 137
- Le Debes 1908 N. Dale Lane, Spokane, WA 99212, or call (509) 924-7350 – Ext. 115

To learn more about the Rural Business Opportunity Grant Program, and other programs offered by USDA Rural Development, visit us online at www.rurdev.usda.gov/wa. ###