



MEDIA RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development
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ECONOMIC IMPACT INITIATIVE GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR SMALL RURAL COMMUNITIES AND TRIBES

USDA Rural Development announces the availability of \$23,595,625 in nationally competitive grant funds to develop essential community facilities in rural communities with extreme high unemployment and severe economic depression.

Low-income communities under 20,000 in population, with a certified “not employed rate” greater than 19.5%, who can meet the requirements of the USDA Direct Community Facilities Grant Program, may be eligible for this funding. Grants are made available to public entities, such as municipalities, counties, and special-service districts, as well as to eligible nonprofit corporations and tribal governments. Essential community facilities are those facilities or equipment, which are customarily provided by a local unit of government and are a public improvement needed for the orderly development of a rural community.

The deadline for filing a preapplication with the Washington State Community Programs Division is close of business on **June 24, 2003**. Before filing a preapplication for this assistance, USDA strongly urges potential applicants to meet with Rural Development Specialists to discuss eligibility requirements and processing procedures. The documentation required will vary depending on the project proposed. Some financial assistance may be available for predevelopment costs.

Further information on this Initiative and preapplication materials can be obtained by contacting any of the following Rural Development offices: Olympia 360-704-7764 or 704-7724; Mt. Vernon 360-428-4322, Ext. 151; Yakima 509-454-5743, Ext. 131; or Wenatchee 509-664-0200.

USDA Rural Development is dedicated to enhancing the ability of rural communities to develop, grow, and improve their quality of life by targeting financial assistance and technical resources in areas of greatest need through activities of greatest potential. For more information on the programs administered by USDA Rural Development in Washington State, you may contact the nearest USDA Service Center or visit their website at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/wa>. ###