



# NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development

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## **USDA Seeks Applications for Grants to Improve the Quality of Rural Housing**

### ***Eligible Applicants Include Public Agencies, Private Non-profit Organizations, Federally Recognized Indian Tribes, and Owners of Rental and Cooperative Housing***

WASHINGTON, DC – April 29, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that USDA is accepting applications for grants to help low- and very-low-income rural residents repair their homes.

“The costs associated with maintaining a home are a challenge for many rural homeowners and the funding we are announcing today will help low- and very-low-income residents in rural areas maintain and repair their homes,” Vilsack said. “The Obama Administration and USDA are working to ensure that rural homeowners have safe, sanitary, energy-efficient places to live.”

Housing Preservation Grants are provided to intermediaries such as town or county governments, public agencies, federally recognized Indian Tribes, and non-profit and faith-based organizations. The grants are then distributed to qualified homeowners or owners of multi-family rental properties or cooperative dwellings who rent to low- and very-low-income residents. The grants can be used to weatherize and repair existing structures, install or improve plumbing or provide access to people with disabilities.

For example, recently, USDA provided a Housing Preservation Grants of \$50,000 to Neighborhood Housing Services of Black Hills, Inc. to help rehabilitate the homes of 14 very-low-income families living in western South Dakota. Funds were used to upgrade and repair plumbing, electrical work, roofing, foundations, windows and doors and to create accessibility for homeowners with disabilities.

In 2008, the Kendal County Public Health Department, headquartered in Yorkville, Ill., received a \$53,000 Housing Preservation Grant, matched with funds from a state weatherization grant, to help rural families in the Department’s two-county service area make their homes more energy efficient. With the funds, the agency was able provide a \$3,925 grant to help David and Maria Blas in Plano, Ill., insulate their attic, caulk the frames of all their windows, replace the roof, and clean their hot water heater, making it operationally more efficient.

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USDA may award up to \$10.1 million in competitive grants through the Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) published in the April 27, 2010 *Federal Register*. The grants to be awarded are part of USDA Rural Development's annual budget and are not funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

USDA, through its Rural Development mission area, administers and manages more than 40 housing, business and community infrastructure and facility programs through a national network of 6,100 employees located in the nation's capital and 500 national, state and local offices. These programs are designed to improve the economic stability of rural communities, businesses, residents, farmers and ranchers and improve the quality of life in rural America. Rural Development has an existing portfolio of more than \$134 billion in loans and loan guarantees.

Rural Development serves as the lead Federal entity for rural development needs and administers program assistance through its housing, business, community and infrastructure programs. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

Further information on USDA Rural Development may be obtained by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>. In West Virginia, call 1-800-295-8228 to be put in touch with the appropriate personnel serving your county. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202.720.2600 (voice and TDD).

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