



NEWS RELEASE

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

Funding Available to weatherize and repair existing structures, install or improve plumbing or provide access to people with disabilities

WASHINGTON, DC – July 22, 2011 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced today that applications are being accepted for grants to eligible applicants to help low- and very-low-income rural residents repair their homes.

"These funds help limited-income rural homeowners improve their living conditions," Vilsack said. "The costs associated with maintaining a home are a challenge for many rural homeowners and the funding we are announcing will be used by awardees to help low and very-low-income residents in rural areas maintain and repair their homes."

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. Funding is not provided directly to homeowners by USDA under this program.

The grants can be used to weatherize and repair existing structures, install or improve plumbing or provide access to people with disabilities. For example, in 2009, The Jefferson County Board of Supervisors in Fayette, Miss. received a \$75,000 Housing Preservation Grant, along with funds from the Mississippi Development Authority to repair and rehabilitate homes. With these funds, the agency was able provide a \$15,000 grant to help homeowner Willie Henry Reed make his bathroom and kitchen handicap-accessible. Funds were also used to repair a leaking roof.

USDA may award up to \$9.8 million in competitive grants through the [Housing Preservation Grant](#) program. Applications are due on August 22, 2011. For more information about application details, please view the Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) published in the July 7, 2011 [Federal Register](#).

Committed to the future of rural communities.

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Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

Housing Preservation Grants help bring job growth and stability to low-income communities while improving the living conditions of rural Americans.

In June, President Obama signed an Executive Order establishing the first White House Rural Council, chaired by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. The White House Rural Council will work throughout government to create policies to promote economic prosperity and a high quality of life in our rural communities.

Since taking office, President Obama's Administration has taken significant steps to improve the lives of rural Americans and has provided broad support for rural communities. The Obama Administration has set goals of modernizing infrastructure by providing broadband access to 10 million Americans, expanding educational opportunities for students in rural areas, and providing affordable health care. In the long term, these unparalleled rural investments will help ensure that America's rural communities are repopulating, self-sustaining, and thriving economically.

USDA, through its Rural Development mission area, administers and manages housing, business and community infrastructure and facility programs through a national network of state and local offices. Rural Development has an existing portfolio of more than \$153 billion in loans and loan guarantees. 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.

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