

USDA SEEKS APPLICATIONS FOR HOUSEHOLD WATER WELL GRANTS

Program Provides Access to Clean, Safe Drinking Water

WASHINGTON, May 6, 2009 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced the availability of funding for applications from non-profit organizations for funds to help rural homeowners construct or upgrade household water well systems.

The funding is provided through USDA Rural Development's Household Water Well System grant program. USDA plans to award up to four grants to non-profit groups that will use the funds to establish loan program for homeowners. Loans may not exceed \$11,000 and will carry a term up to 20 years at a one percent annual interest rate.

“Because many rural residents do not live in areas where a centralized water system is feasible, it is essential that their wells are safe and working properly,” said Vilsack.

The Household Water Well Grant program complements President Obama's environmental initiatives and provides support for rural residents.

USDA Rural Development plans to award up to \$993,000 in grants. Non-profit groups must contribute at least 10 percent of the grant request. Individuals are not eligible for grants but may be eligible for loans if their annual household income does not exceed 100 percent of their state or territory's median non-metropolitan income. Loans may not be provided for home sewer or septic system projects.

The grants to be awarded under this notice are part of USDA Rural Development's annual budget and are not funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

This Notice follows the November 20, 2008, release of a Notice of Solicitation of Applications that opened the application filing window. Applications are due by the close of business May 31. The application guide for this grant program can be found at <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/HWWSP.htm>. Also see the April 29, 2009, Federal Register, page 19503.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. Rural Development fosters growth in homeownership, finances business development and supports the creation of critical community and technology infrastructure. 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>.