

USDA/Rural Development

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USDA ANNOUNCES \$6 MILLION IN GRANTS FOR RURAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

WASHINGTON, August 4, 2003 – Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced last week the availability of \$6 million in USDA Rural Development grant funds designed to support rural economic and community development efforts.

“Through the development of local financial and technical assistance programs supported by these grant funds, rural communities can increase their capacity to bring community and economic development opportunities to local residents,” said USDA Under Secretary for Rural Development Thomas C. Dorr.

USDA's [Rural Community Development Initiative](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/common/non_profit_intro.htm) (RCDI) [\[http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/common/non_profit_intro.htm\]](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/common/non_profit_intro.htm) provides funds to help nonprofit, community-based development organizations, federally recognized Indian tribes and low-income communities improve their ability to develop rural housing and community facilities and to improve economic growth. Recipients are required to obtain matching funds, doubling the value of the USDA grants. Funding of selected applicants will be contingent upon meeting the conditions of the grant agreement.

Grant recipients will provide training and technical assistance to eligible nonprofit community-development organizations and low-income communities located in rural areas with populations of 50,000 or less. Technical assistance includes: setting up homeownership education programs; supporting micro-enterprises, cooperatives and sustainable development; and providing training to develop strategic plans, hire staff and oversee board operations and management.

Detailed information about program requirements and information on how to apply is available in the July 30, 2003 Federal Register Volume 68, Number 146 Pages 44729-44738 that can be accessed at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/>. Please note that October 28, 2003 is the deadline for applications. Additional information on the grant program and other USDA Rural Development programs can be obtained by visiting: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/>.

The Bush Administration provided \$12 million in RCDI funds in 2002 to assist with over 41 proposals in 22 states and the District of Columbia. Nebraska recipients were the Nebraska Department of Economic Development-Lincoln, Neb. receiving \$700,000 and the Center for Rural Affairs-Walthill, Neb. acquiring \$60,000.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs in a way that will support increasing economic opportunity and improve the quality of life of rural residents. As a venture capital entity, Rural Development provides equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA's web site at www.rurdev.usda.gov. In Nebraska contact the State Office at 402-437-5551 or a local office by consulting the blue pages of the local phone directory under United States Government, also visit www.rurdev.usda.gov/ne.

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