



United States Department of Agriculture
Rural Development
San Juan, PR

NEWS RELEASE

Media Contact: Miguel A. Ramírez
Phone: (787) 766-5095 X 232
E-mail: miguel.ramirez@pr.usda.gov

USDA CELEBRATES NATIONAL HOMEOWNERSHIP MONTH

WASHINGTON, June 1, 2009 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today kicked off National Homeownership Month with events highlighting USDA’s success in increasing rural homeownership.

“Even in tough economic times, homeownership remains the foundation by which families and communities lay claim to the American dream,” Vilsack said. “President Obama has made homeownership a cornerstone of his economic recovery plan by taking decisive action to protect the homes of existing owners and to provide opportunities for all Americans seeking to buy their first home.”

Pedro Gómez, USDA Rural Development Acting State Director for Puerto Rico, indicated that the first phase of the funding - \$4.1 million – will be for technical assistance services performed between June 1, 2009 and October 31, 2009. The remainder will be used beginning November 1, 2009. In addition to the \$14.2 million, USDA Rural Development anticipates making Recovery Act funds available later in the year through a competitive grant process for further technical assistance services.

President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 into law on February 17, 2009. It is designed to jumpstart the nation’s economy, create or save millions of jobs and put a down payment on addressing long-neglected challenges so our country can thrive in the 21st century. The Act includes measures to modernize our nation’s infrastructure, enhance energy independence, expand educational opportunities, preserve and improve affordable health care, provide tax relief, and protect those in greatest need.

654 Plaza, Muñoz Rivera Ave., Hato Rey PR 00918
PO Box 366106 - San Juan, PR 00936-6106
Phone: (787)766-5095 • Fax: (787) 766-5844 • TDD: (787) 766-5332

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More information about USDA's Recovery Act efforts is available at www.usda.gov/recovery. More information about the Federal government's effort on the Recovery Act is available at www.recovery.gov.

Additional information on the Rural Development's Programs can be obtained by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov> or by calling Nereida Rodríguez at (787) 766-5095 X 250 or Miguel A. Ramírez at X 232. USDA Rural Development is committed to the future of rural communities.