

## STAKEHOLDER ANNOUNCEMENT

### USDA Invites Applications to Help Disadvantaged Groups Strengthen Capacity

WASHINGTON, June 23, 2021 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced that it is seeking applications for grants under the [Socially-Disadvantaged Groups Grant program](#).

The purpose of this program is to provide technical assistance to socially-disadvantaged groups in rural areas. Eligible applicants include cooperatives, groups of cooperatives and cooperative development centers with a majority of its board of directors or governing board comprised of individuals who are members of socially disadvantaged groups. A socially-disadvantaged group is one whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group and without regard to their individual qualities.

This program supports Rural Development's mission to improve the quality of life for rural Americans and commitment to direct agency resources to those who most need them. Grant funds may be used only for the benefit of socially-disadvantaged groups in rural areas.

For FY 2021, USDA plans to award up to \$3 million in grants. The maximum grant award is \$175,000. Grants may be used to develop and operate a Rural Cooperative Development Center that could provide the following technical assistance and other services to rural socially-disadvantaged groups and businesses:

- Conducting feasibility studies
- Developing business plans
- Providing leadership and operational improvement training

Completed applications must be submitted electronically through [Grants.gov](#) no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Aug. 9, 2021. For additional information, see page 32882 of the June 23 [Federal Register](#).

Questions about the application process may be directed to the Rural Development State Office where the applicant is located. For a list of offices, visit the [RD state office website](#).

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