

USDA Seeks Applications for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Loans and Grants

Contact: Christine Feroli

(202) 401-0080

Washington, District of Columbia, October 18, 2016 —

USDA Rural Business-Cooperative Service Administrator Sam Ridders today encouraged rural small businesses and agricultural producers to apply for loans and grants to support renewable energy and energy efficiency projects.

"These projects create long-term, economic benefits for businesses and rural communities," Ridders said. "USDA's funding helps promote U.S. energy independence and supports the production of home-grown energy sources. I encourage all eligible applicants to take advantage of this opportunity. These investments can help a small business cut costs, expand operations, hire more workers and provide a better service to the communities in which they operate."

USDA is accepting Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) applications for: 1) energy audit and renewable energy development assistance grants, and 2) renewable energy system and energy efficiency guaranteed loans and grants.

The application deadline for energy audit and renewable energy development assistance grants is Jan. 31, 2017. Applications for renewable energy system and energy efficiency grants of \$20,000 or less are due by Oct. 31, 2016, for the first funding cycle and March 31, 2017, for the second funding cycle. Applications for renewable energy system and energy efficiency grants of greater than \$20,000 and all combination grants and guaranteed loans are due by March 31, 2017. USDA will set aside 20 percent of the funds for grants of \$20,000 or less.

Applications for renewable energy system and energy efficiency grants or for loan/grant combinations that are received after March 31, 2017, will be considered in Fiscal Year 2018, which starts Oct. 1, 2017. Guaranteed loan applications will be reviewed and processed when received, with periodic competitions. For additional information, contact the USDA energy coordinator for your state, or see page 71689 of the October 18 Federal Register. New York's Energy Coordinator is Gary Pereira and he can be reached at: (315) 736-3316 ext. 129 or by email at: gary.pereira@ny.usda.gov

Eligible applicants for renewable energy system and energy efficiency loans and grants include agricultural producers and rural small businesses, which may include tribal business entities, rural electric cooperatives and public power entities. Renewable energy sources include wind, solar, renewable biomass (including anaerobic digesters), small hydro-electric, ocean, geothermal or hydrogen derived from these renewable resources. Eligible applicants for energy audit and renewable energy development assistance grants include State, tribal or local governments; institutions of higher education; and rural electric cooperatives and public power entities.

Congress created the REAP program in the 2002 Farm Bill and reauthorized it in the 2014 Farm Bill with guaranteed funding of no less than \$50 million annually for the duration of the five-year bill.

In 2015, USDA provided a \$500,000 REAP grant to support SR Camden LLC's solar farm in Camden, Ark. The \$32 million, 12 megawatt solar array on 100 acres at the Highland Industrial Park has more than 150,000 solar panels. The energy produced from the panels is fed to the adjacent electric utility substation and is enough to power about 2,400 homes for a year.

Nationwide, USDA has helped finance more than 12,000 REAP projects since 2009. When fully operational, these projects will generate or save enough energy to power more than 750,000 homes annually, and replace more than 36 million barrels of oil annually.

Since 2009, USDA Rural Development (@USDARD) has invested nearly \$13 billion to start or expand nearly 112,000 rural businesses; helped 1.1 million rural residents buy homes; funded nearly 9,200 community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care facilities; and helped bring high-speed Internet access to nearly 6 million rural residents and businesses. USDA also has invested \$31.3 billion in 963 electric projects that have financed more than 185,000 miles of transmission and distribution lines serving 4.6 million rural residents. For more information, visit www.usda.gov/results.

To read more about USDA's investments in rural America and its successful turnaround, visit USDA's entry on Medium.com, [Rural America Is Back in Business](#) .

#

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.