

Loan and grant information for farmers and other agricultural businesses, non-profits and co-ops

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- In Fiscal Year 2009 USDA Rural Development in Southern New England provided more than \$23 million in assistance through its Rural Business & Cooperative Programs.
- Rural Development is one of seven USDA mission areas with programs that can assist farmers, help consumers access nutritious foods, and support rural community development.

CONTACT:

Lyndon S. Nichols, Area Director
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Rural Development
52 Boydon Road
Holden, MA 01520

508-829-4477, x125

lyndon.nichols@ma.usda.gov

Value Added Producers Grant

Who can apply: Private, for-profit agri-business owners who want to add value to their raw commodity by further processing it. Example: a wheat grower makes bread or pizza crusts or a corn grower produces ethanol or biodiesel.

There are Reserve Funds for beginning/socially disadvantaged farmers.

Type and uses: Matching grants, competitive. Funder considers likelihood of success, impact on economy, job creation. Can be used for planning activities (feasibility study, marketing plan) or working capital to market the new value added product.

Cooperative Stock Purchase Program

Designed to help farmers buy the stock often required for membership in a new or existing value-added coop.

Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Improvement Grants and Loans

Rural Energy for America Program

Who can apply: Agricultural producers and rural small businesses to purchase and install renewable energy systems and make energy efficient improvements. (Ex: biofuels, wind, solar, geothermal and hydrogen-based projects – efficient lighting or insulation, purchasing or replacing equipment with more efficient units). Most rural projects that reduce energy use and result in savings for the agricultural producer or small business are eligible.

www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbsbusp/9006grant.htm for more details and other REAP funding opportunities.

Rural Business enterprise and Rural Business Opportunity Grants

These programs support the development of small and emerging businesses for start-up or expansion.

Who can apply: Local governments, economic development corps, and non-profit organizations

Types and uses: Marketing research, product or service improvement, projects that involve farmers market managers and for-profit private business owners.

Community Facilities Loans and Grants

Who can apply: Local governments, non-profit organizations and Indian tribes

Project examples: Farmers markets, school kitchens and community kitchens, community food banks; food storage and preparation and distribution centers. Finance “essential community facilities” in rural areas with no more than 20,000 residents.

Loans and grants for rural businesses and cooperative programs

Who can apply: Grants to public bodies, non-profit corporations and Indian tribes for acquisition and development of land, procurement of equipment, construction of buildings and access roads; fees for professional services.

B&I Guarantee Loan Program

Helps new and existing businesses based in rural areas gain access to affordable capital.

Who can apply: Recipient of a loan guarantee is a lender who makes a loan in an eligible town with a population less than 50,000 to any of the following business owners: cooperatives, non-profit orgs, corporations, partnerships and other legal entities including individuals.

Type and uses: Loans can be used for such things as business conversion and enlargement, repair, modernization and development; purchase and development of land, easements, buildings, rights-of-way; purchase of machinery, equipment, supplies and inventory; working capital and debt financing.

Same as Rural Business Investment Program? Venture capital investment by for-profit rural business investment companies.

Rural Cooperative Development Grants

Who can apply: New or existing cooperatives to establish or improve operations. For more info, go to www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/csdir.htm

ATTRA

Also called the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service, it specializes in responding to questions about specific agricultural sustainable enterprises or practices. For more info, go to www.attra.ncat.org.