

USDA Grants to Support Rural Businesses and Create Jobs

Written by USDA

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STEVENS POINT, WI - U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development Wisconsin State Director, Stan Gruszynski, announced Thursday that USDA is seeking applications for grants to support rural businesses and help create jobs.

“Our mission is to support and contribute to the economic viability of rural communities and help them build toward the future,” Gruszynski said. “Too often, rural businesses and the communities they serve lack access to the capital and resources they need to grow and thrive. These grants will help remedy that and provide access to planning, mentoring and other services that can help to ensure their success.”

Under the Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) program funds can be used to acquire or develop land, buildings, plants and equipment; build or improve access roads, parking areas, utility extensions, and water and waste disposal facilities; provide technical assistance; establish revolving loan funds; and to support rural distance learning programs for educational or job training.

Eligible applicants include:

- Public bodies
- Government entities
- Federally-recognized Tribes
- Non-profit organizations

For example, Vernon Economic Development Association (VEDA), in Viroqua, WI, successfully assisted five businesses with a \$43,000 grant award, creating and saving 27 local jobs in the process. The organization’s Food Enterprise Center, a state-of-the-art value-added food processing, aggregation, and distribution facility used grant funds to provide technical assistance to the small, rural businesses utilizing the Center.

The application deadline is March 31, 2016. For additional information on how to apply,

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contact the USDA Rural Development Wisconsin State Office at 715-345-7610 or RD.BCP.SO@wi.usda.gov

. Application instructions and related forms are available at www.rd.usda.gov/wi

. Applications must be sent to the USDA Rural Development Wisconsin State Office, 5417 Clem's Way, Stevens Point, WI 54482.

Congress established the RBDG program under the 2014 Farm Bill by combining USDA's Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEGr) and Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOGr) programs. The new program, like its predecessors, is designed to assist the startup or expansion of small and emerging private businesses and/or non-profits in rural communities.

During the past year, USDA Rural Development invested nearly \$577 million throughout rural Wisconsin and helped a record number of residents receive funding for economic development projects and quality of life improvements. The agency's investment in Wisconsin helped create or retain more than 1,560 jobs; aided 3,000 families in buying their own homes; and assisted more than 80 communities in improving community facilities and upgrading local infrastructure. For more information on USDA Rural Development programs visit USDA's web site at www.rd.usda.gov/wi

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