



Rural Development  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



# USDA Resource Guide for Rural Workforce Development

Together, America Prospers

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Created by the [USDA Rural Development Innovation Center](#)

America's rural workforce provides a vital foundation for the nation's economy. Rural America supplies the nation's food and energy resources, and the fiber necessary for goods and manufacturing. As USDA continues to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and help restore the economy, we remain committed to supporting rural employers and job seekers to rebuild rural America's workforce better, stronger and more equitably than ever before.

For these reasons, USDA is prioritizing collaborations with its federal partners to help start and grow thousands of businesses and give individuals the educational and financial tools to succeed in rural America. This guide was created for community leaders and other local entities to help them access resources to create jobs, train talent, expand educational opportunities and provide technical assistance. The guide outlines programs and services available at USDA and other federal departments and agencies that support workforce development in rural communities.

The guide highlights four key assistance types necessary to building a stronger rural workforce:

1. Workforce development planning
2. Infrastructure and equipment financing
3. Industry and employer engagement, entrepreneurship and local business development
4. Education, training and apprenticeship

Examples on page 2 illustrate how customers have used USDA programs to support each assistance type. A resource matrix on page 10 organizes USDA funding opportunities by customer and assistance type.

A list of additional federal resources that complement USDA funding opportunities is provided on page 16. Additional USDA resource guides are available on page 17.





# How Your Rural Community can use USDA Programs to Build a Stronger Workforce

## 1. Workforce Development Planning

Ideally, workforce development planning is supported by various organizations in your community, such as your Chamber of Commerce, local workforce development board, and government leaders. Good planning ensures communities and businesses are equipped with skills, experiences and competencies that meet the present and future needs of a given workforce. A network of stakeholders – including state and local government, education and training institutions, employers, entrepreneurs, and social and infrastructure service providers – must be at the table in order to build a comprehensive plan.

### Recommended Practices

- Invite your local workforce development board to participate and monitor priorities in your region to leverage its funding resources for your community. Contact your state government agency to find your local board.
- Use key data – such as employment rates and demand for services in your rural area – to understand workforce gaps and opportunities, make strategic investments, identify and nurture strategic partnerships, and track impact.
- Identify and understand the unique characteristics, opportunities and workforce development needs of various population groups (for example: youth, adults, rural communities, or veterans).
- Integrate the needs of employers and workers.
- Align workforce development planning and economic development planning activities at an early stage in the plan.
- Develop cross-sector strategies and governance.
- Periodically revise your plan.

## Success Story

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### Regional Plan Sets Solid Foundation for Workforce Development in Rural Tennessee

*(Rural Community Development Initiative Grants)*

The Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) partnered with the National Rural Education Association (NREA) to develop a regional approach to workforce development planning for four rural counties in Tennessee.

In 2019, Chester, Decatur, Henderson and Perry counties each were designated as economically distressed, at-risk, or transitional. To help spur long-term growth in community and economic development, the two organizations devised a plan to leverage community funding, resources and subject matter experts to help improve workforce readiness.

USDA Rural Development awarded TBR a \$250,000 Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI) grant to support this project. The RCDI program helps community development organizations, low-income rural communities and federally-recognized Tribes finance housing, community facilities and community

and economic development projects in rural areas. The funds can be used to develop strategic plans, access alternative funding sources, support board training, organize fundraisers, develop childcare facilities and create training tools.

TBR used the grant to increase technical career awareness among K-12 students and improve dual enrollment opportunities for high school students to earn college credit and technical career certifications at the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology. The grant financed a regional digital portal to help students, staff and parents access resources, toolkits and courses. Funding also helped implement more effective uses of regional labor market data to better align individuals with careers that will have the greatest economic impact.

TBR campuses are actively working with county, business and industry leaders to prepare students for life beyond high school. Funding also supports college curriculum and career plan development for students to help meet the region's workforce needs.

This project is an example of USDA's commitment to support new and creative ways to collaborate with local organizations to spur community development, grow businesses, and give individuals the financial tools to succeed in rural America.

“The College System of Tennessee, governed by the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR), is Tennessee's largest higher education system, governing 40 post-secondary educational institutions with over 200 teaching locations. The TBR system includes 13 community colleges, 27 colleges of applied technology, and TN eCampus, providing programs to students across the state, country, and world.”





## 2. Infrastructure and Equipment Financing

Infrastructure and social services are driving factors in attracting and retaining industries and employees. High-speed internet, transportation facilities, and water and waste facilities all are critical for industry growth. Access to health care, education, nutrition and community spaces help improve quality of life.

### Recommended Practices

- Identify gaps and opportunities to make strategic infrastructure investments supporting workforce development goals.
- Design social service programs that meet demographic needs (for example: veterans, single parents, age or disability status).
- Invest in infrastructure that enables access to technology and expands training and employment opportunities for communities with physical transportation barriers.

“Broadband connectivity is a vital infrastructure obstacle for rural economic development right now.”

## Success Story

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### Rural Telephone Cooperative Takes Networking to New Level

#### *(Telecommunication Direct Loan Program)*

Built on speculation and hope, a 42,000-square-foot facility in rural Metter, Georgia stood empty for nearly 30 years, awaiting the perfect occupant. In fact, it was the oldest “spec” building in the state until 2014, when Australian entrepreneur Sebastian Falzon spotted it as a diamond-in-the-rough. Within a year, Falzon – the president of Australia-based Concrete Pump Engineering (CPE) – moved its North American headquarters to Metter.

Globally partnered with Korea-based Everdigm – an international leader in concrete pumps, hydraulic attachments, and tower cranes – CPE America is the North American distributor of Everdigm concrete pumps used in commercial, housing, and industrial construction. Why would a multinational, multimillion dollar company choose to land in such a small American town? As the old real estate mantra goes, “Location, location, location!”

Flanking Interstate 16, Metter offers easy access to the Port of Savannah. It’s known as a family-friendly town with a robust education system. But perhaps most importantly – thanks to Metter-based Pineland Telephone Cooperative’s longstanding initiatives in the region – access to reliable broadband infrastructure moved the Candler County town of 4,000 to the top of CPE America’s list.

Following six years of consistent growth, CPE America continues to thrive. While CPE’s Southeast Georgia location certainly contributes to its success, the company could not have endured – particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic – without strong global connectivity. In Metter, neither CPE America – nor any other company – has to worry about having reliable broadband internet service to continue efficient, effective operations. With 100 percent broadband coverage in the entire Candler County area, businesses, employees, and their families had one less obstacle to overcome during the pandemic.

“Thanks to Pineland Telephone and their forward-thinking initiatives, Metter companies, schools, and families do not have to worry about staying connected to live their lives to their fullest potential,” said Hannah Mullins, executive

director of the Candler County Industrial Authority. “Broadband connectivity is a vital infrastructure obstacle for rural economic development right now, but it is the strongest advantage we have in Metter.

For that, I am thankful, and happy to partner with Pineland Telephone Cooperative to be able to help companies flourish financially in this amazing small town.”

Pineland Co-op General Manager Dustin Durden cautions that the mere presence of broadband doesn’t necessarily mean businesses will come. But, while foundational infrastructure such as electricity, water, and wastewater treatment may be considered prerequisites for telecommunications, Durden says in modern times, “Not having broadband is an eliminating factor.”

In a small town where public-private cooperation is key to sustaining a strong local economy, Pineland Co-op is doing its part to ensure its communities have access to leading-edge broadband connectivity. A USDA partner since the 1950s, Pineland has steadily developed its network capacity, offering increasingly diverse services and now, fiber technology. In the last 10 years, Pineland has received two awards totaling more than \$28 million from USDA’s Rural Utilities Service. With these funds, Pineland constructed more than 1,800 miles of fiber and provided expanded video and gigabit-enabled packages to co-op members.

Both Mullins and Durden emphasize the importance of fostering collaborative energy across businesses, public institutions, and the workforce. In another testament to the power of partnerships, Pineland worked closely with the Candler County Industrial Authority to ease CPE America’s move to Metter, ensuring the fiber connection to the former spec building was robust and ready.

Pineland’s collaborations also extend beyond the Industrial Authority and the Metter-Candler Chamber of Commerce to encompass rural communities and organizations who want to provide broadband to their customers outside the Pineland service area.

USDA is pleased to continue its 70-year partnership with Pineland Telephone Co-op and hundreds of other organizations dedicated to bringing fast, reliable broadband access – as important today as electrification was in the 1930s – to rural America.





### 3. Industry and Employer Engagement, Entrepreneurship and Local Business Development

Active employer engagement is critical to developing effective education and training programs that meet current and anticipated workforce demands. Prior to design and delivery, industry partners should be given the opportunity to not only to share their workforce needs, but also to contribute continually to the design and delivery of training curricula and apprenticeship programs.

#### Recommended Practices

- Invest in resources to spark innovation, entrepreneurship and business development in targeted sectors.
- Engage employers from target sectors and identify their specific workforce needs.
- Build partnerships with community organizations – such as chambers of commerce or trade organizations – for an effective and coordinated collaboration with industry partners.
- Consult industry partners to help design education programs and curricula.
- Engage employers to help develop work-based learning and apprenticeship programs.
- Partner with U.S. Department of Labor’s Job Corps to help industry partners recruit and train youth.

Self-sufficiency, wise resource management, and a spirit of entrepreneurship have always been traditional Lakota values. Four Bands helps our people and communities grow these values and adapt them to today’s modern economy.



## Success Story

### Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation Investments Target Cycle of Poverty

*Business Incubator, Community Fund Cultivates Tribal Economic Opportunity, Prosperity*

#### *Rural Business Development Grant*

A little more than two decades ago, the nonprofit **Four Bands Community Fund** launched an innovative community and economic development movement on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation.

Four Bands leverages partnerships with USDA Rural Development, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Indian Health Service, The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund, and local businesses, lenders, and partners to maximize community impact. Four Bands creatively meets the community's capital and technical assistance needs and develops business and housing opportunities on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation and for its enrolled Tribal members living in South Dakota.

Since 2001, USDA Rural Development's commitment to the Fund has led to 26 distinct awards from the Rural Business Development Grant (**RBDG**) program and its predecessors – the Rural Business Enterprise, and Rural Business Opportunity Grant programs.

In addition to the revolving loan fund, Four Bands uses Rural Development-funded resources to provide technical assistance and training through its Eagle Butte business incubator, advising entrepreneurs on how to finance and manage their rural businesses.

Four Bands helps establish and support small and emerging businesses in a reservation area which historically has struggled with high poverty and unemployment. This locally-grown solution offers hope – and creates opportunity – for rural Native American families and the communities in which they live. The long-term positive impacts of this investment in the spirit of entrepreneurship are inspiring, and USDA Rural Development is honored to be a part of such a vital, ongoing collaboration.

Program	Dollar Amount	Date Closed or Obligated
Active Grant Program		
RBDG	\$99,999	2020
RBDG	\$99,999	2018
RBDG	\$99,998	2017
RBDG	\$87,700	2016
RBDG	\$99,995	2015
Absorbed into RBDG		
RBEG	\$99,000	2013
RBEG	\$99,000	2012
RBEG	\$99,000	2011
RBEG	\$55,000	2010
RBEG	\$75,000	2008
RBEG	\$74,000	2007
RBEG	\$65,000	2006
RBEG	\$55,000	2005
RBEG	\$60,000	2004
RBEG	\$50,000	2002
RBEG	\$50,000	2011
Absorbed into RBDG		
RBOG	\$50,000	2013
RBOG	\$50,000	2012
RBOG	\$50,000	2011
RBOG	\$50,000	2009
RBOG	\$95,000	2007
RBOG	\$95,000	2006
RBOG	\$75,000	2005
RBOG	\$95,000	2004
RBOG	\$50,000	2002
RBOG	\$50,000	2001

To learn more about Four Bands, visit [fourbands.org/programs/](http://fourbands.org/programs/).



#### 4. Education, Training and Apprenticeship

Competency-based education is a personalized approach that aims to identify, acquire and track progress of foundational, technical, sectoral, industry-based and occupational skill sets and competencies essential to growing a globally competitive and agile workforce. Educational institutions are increasingly turning toward competency-based education because it is an effective learning mechanism that measures success through knowledge mastery instead of time spent learning. This type of education can start to be delivered in K-12 or at technical and higher education institutions. It can also be incorporated into apprenticeship programs.

#### Recommended Practices

- Invite your local workforce development board to participate and monitor workforce development priorities in your region and access funding resources.
- Use data strategically to understand workforce gaps and opportunities and make strategic investments, identify and nurture strategic partnerships and track impact.
- Understand the unique characteristics, opportunities and workforce development needs in various population groups (e.g. youth, adults, rural communities, veterans, etc.)
- Integrate the needs of employers and workers.
- Align workforce development planning and economic development planning activities at an early stage in the plan.
- Develop cross-sector strategies and governance.
- Revise plan periodically.



## Success Story

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### Grant Provides Rural Schools with Robots (and College Credits)

#### *Distance Learning Telemedicine Program*

Ohio's educators are keying into innovative solutions when it comes to serving their rural students. In places like Plymouth, Ohio, whose population is under 2,000, students often are unable to access certain classes, particularly those that qualify for the state's free College Credit Plus (CCP) education program. This program gives eligible students the unique opportunity to graduate with a high school diploma in one hand and college credits, possibly even an associate degree or college certificate, in the other hand. To participate in this program, students may attend classes at a college campus, at school with credentialed instructors, or online. However, for rural students even this degree of flexibility can be limiting. Dual enrollment courses are not offered in many rural schools. To address this gap, North Central State College (North Central) is using distance learning to increase the capacity of rural schools throughout north central Ohio.

With funding from a 2015 Rural Utilities Service Distance Learning and Telemedicine grant, North Central now connects rural students, including those attending Plymouth High School, to CCP courses—from general classes to specialized science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education. STEM education, in particular, is critical to development of a skilled workforce, especially in a state where manufacturing is its largest sector, based on GDP. North Central installed video conferencing equipment in its learning and outreach centers to deliver live college-level instruction to four rural schools as well as 15 school districts, which are part of the Mid-Ohio Educational Service Center (ESC). In addition to increasing the number of advanced courses available to students, North Central and ESC are using the grant funded equipment to increase school access in traditional and non-traditional ways.

For example, five new telepresence robots now facilitate collaborative learning environments and professional development services throughout ESC's network of school districts. For students that are homebound, often due to a long-term illness, these robots help maintain educational continuity by allowing them to attend school remotely. From home, these students use a tablet to control the robot, which wheels from class to class, transmits live instruction, and interacts with teachers and peers.

"We are happy to look at opportunities to get these [robots] out into the schools so they can be used for learning," ESC Director of Education Amanda Mahon said.

By working together to distribute and utilize resources in creative ways, these multilevel partnerships increase student exposure to specialized content in high need subject areas like STEM and enhance professional development opportunities for teachers throughout the region.

# Rural Workforce Resource Guide Matrix

 <p><b>Customers*</b></p>	 <p><b>Workforce Development Planning</b></p>	 <p><b>Infrastructure and Equipment</b> <i>Utilities, transportation, workforce housing, training centers, end-use equipment</i></p>	 <p><b>Industry and Employer Engagement, Entrepreneurship, Local Business Development</b> <i>Employer-based curriculum design, business site consulting</i></p>	 <p><b>Education, Training, Apprenticeship</b> <i>Higher education, skills-based training, vocational training, on-the-job training</i></p>
<p><b>For-profit businesses or individuals:</b> <i>Corporations, limited liability companies, sole proprietorships, etc.</i></p>	<p><b>Rural Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Community Development Initiative Grants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Value-Added Producer Grants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program</a></li> </ul> <p><b>U.S. Forest Service</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">US Forest Service Youth Workforce Development Programs</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>Rural Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Business and Industry Loan Guarantees</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Housing Preservation &amp; Revitalization Demonstration Loans &amp; Grants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Farm Labor Direct Loans &amp; Grants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Multifamily Housing Direct Loans and Multifamily Housing Loan Guarantees</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Community Connect Grants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Broadband Access Loan and Loan Guarantee</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Telecommunications Infrastructure Loans and Guarantees</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Distributed Generation Energy Project Financing</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Farm Service Agency</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">FSA Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Loans FSA Microloans</a></li> </ul> <p><b>National Institute of Food and Agriculture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Small Business Innovation Research</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>Rural Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Community Development Initiative Grants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Value-Added Producer Grants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Business and Industry Loan Guarantees</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Business Investment Program</a></li> </ul> <p><b>National Institute of Food and Agriculture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Small Business Innovation Research</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>U.S. Forest Service</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">US Forest Service Youth Workforce Development Programs</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Farm Service Agency</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">FSA Youth Loans</a></li> </ul> <p><b>National Institute of Food and Agriculture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">AFRI Education and Workforce Development Program</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Veterinary Services Grant Program (VSGP)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Women and Minorities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Fields Grant Program (WAMS)</a></li> </ul>






\*Specific requirements apply. Please refer to the regulatory guidelines to learn more about applying for these opportunities.



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<p><b>(Continued)</b>  <b>Public Entities:</b>  <i>State or local governments, or federally-recognized Tribes, or Tribal organizations.</i></p>		<p><b>Rural Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Mutual Self-Help Housing Technical Assistance Grants</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Community Connect Grants</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grants</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Rural Broadband Access Loan and Loan Guarantee</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Telecommunications Infrastructure Loans and Guarantees</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Distributed Generation Energy Project Financing</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Water and Environmental Programs Water &amp; Waste Disposal Loan &amp; Grant Program</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Water and Environmental Programs SEARCH Grants</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Water and Environmental Programs Predevelopment Planning Grants</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Intermediary Relending Program</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program (RMAP)</u></a></li> </ul> <p><b>Farm Service Agency</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#"><u>FSA Native American Farm Loan</u></a></li> </ul>		<p><b>Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Socially-Disadvantaged Farmers &amp; Ranchers &amp; Veteran Farmers &amp; Ranchers Program</u></a></li> </ul>

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# Rural Workforce Resource Guide Matrix





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<p><b>Nonprofits and Other Entities:</b> Nonprofits, cooperatives, private, nonprofit schools, hospitals, libraries, faith-based organizations, etc.</p>	<p><b>Rural Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Business Development Grants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Community Development Initiative Grants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Socially-Disadvantaged Groups Grant</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Community Facilities Technical Assistance and Training Grant</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Intermediary Relending Program (IRP)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Water and Environmental Programs Sustainable Management Tools</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Water and Environmental Programs Technical Assistance and Training Grants</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>Rural Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Business Development Grants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Business and Industry Loan Guarantees</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Community Facilities Direct Loans &amp; Grants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Community Facilities Guaranteed Loan Program</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Community Facilities Relending Program</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Economic Impact Initiative Grants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Community Facilities Technical Assistance and Training Grant</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Farm Labor Direct Loans &amp; Grants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Housing Preservation &amp; Revitalization Demonstration Loans &amp; Grants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Multifamily Housing Direct Loans and Multifamily Housing Loan Guarantees</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Housing Site Loans</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Mutual Self-Help Housing Technical Assistance Grants</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>Rural Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Business Development Grants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Community Development Initiative Grants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Socially-Disadvantaged Groups Grant</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Value Added Producer Grants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Business and Industry Loan Guarantees</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Community Facilities Technical Assistance and Training Grant</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Cooperative Development Grant Program (RCDG)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Intermediary Relending Program</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program (RMAP)</a></li> </ul> <p><b>National Institute of Food and Agriculture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">AFRI Education and Workforce Development Program</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>Rural Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Business Development Grants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Community Facilities Technical Assistance and Training Grant</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Cooperative Development Grant Program (RCDG)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Water and Environmental Programs Sustainable Management Tools</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Water and Environmental Programs Solid Waste Management Grants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Water and Environmental Programs Technical Assistance and Training Grants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Intermediary Relending Program (IRP)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program (RMAP)</a></li> </ul> <p><b>National Institute of Food and Agriculture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">AFRI Education and Workforce Development Program</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Veterinary Services Grant Program (VSGP)</a></li> </ul>

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<p><b>(Continued) Nonprofits and Other Entities:</b>                      Nonprofits, cooperatives, private, nonprofit schools, hospitals, libraries, faith-based organizations, etc.</p>	<p><b>Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u><a href="#">Socially-Disadvantaged Farmers &amp; Ranchers &amp; Veteran Farmers &amp; Ranchers Program</a></u></li> </ul>	<p><b>Rural Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u><a href="#">Community Connect Grants</a></u></li> <li>• <u><a href="#">Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grants</a></u></li> <li>• <u><a href="#">Rural Broadband Access Loan and Loan Guarantee</a></u></li> <li>• <u><a href="#">Telecommunications Infrastructure Loans and Guarantees</a></u></li> <li>• <u><a href="#">Water and Environmental Programs Water &amp; Waste Disposal Loan &amp; Grant Program</a></u></li> <li>• <u><a href="#">Water and Environmental Programs SEARCH Grants</a></u></li> <li>• <u><a href="#">Water and Environmental Programs Predevelopment Planning Grants</a></u></li> <li>• <u><a href="#">Intermediary Relending Program</a></u></li> <li>• <u><a href="#">FSA Native American Farm Loans</a></u></li> <li>• <u><a href="#">Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program (RMAP)</a></u></li> </ul>	<p><b>Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u><a href="#">Socially-Disadvantaged Farmers &amp; Ranchers &amp; Veteran Farmers &amp; Ranchers Program</a></u></li> </ul>	<p><b>Food and Nutrition Service</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u><a href="#">Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment &amp; Training (SNAP E&amp;T)</a></u></li> </ul> <p><b>Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u><a href="#">Socially-Disadvantaged Farmers &amp; Ranchers &amp; Veteran Farmers &amp; Ranchers Program</a></u></li> </ul>

\*Specific requirements apply. Please refer to the regulatory guidelines to learn more about applying for these opportunities.

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<p><b>Universities/ Community Colleges/ Educational Institutions:</b> Universities, community colleges, technology institutes, vocational and technical schools, etc.</p>	<p><b>Rural Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Business Development Grants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Community Development Initiative Grants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Water and Environmental Programs Sustainable Management Tools</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>Rural Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Business Development Grants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Tribal College Initiative Grant</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program (RMAP)</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>Rural Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Business Development Grants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Community Development Initiative Grants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Cooperative Development Grant Program (RCDG)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program (RMAP)</a></li> </ul> <p><b>National Institute of Food and Agriculture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">AgrAbility - Assistive Technology Program for Farmers with Disabilities</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Socially-Disadvantaged Farmers &amp; Ranchers &amp; Veteran Farmers &amp; Ranchers Program</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>Rural Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Business Development Grants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Cooperative Development Grant Program (RCDG)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Water and Environmental Programs Sustainable Management Tools</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Water and Environmental Programs Solid Waste Management Grants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program (RMAP)</a></li> </ul> <p><b>U.S. Forest Service</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">US Forest Service Youth Workforce Development Programs</a></li> </ul> <p><b>National Institute of Food and Agriculture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">AgrAbility - Assistive Technology Program for Farmers with Disabilities</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">AFRI Education and Workforce Development Program</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program (MSP)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">National Needs Graduate and Postgraduate Fellowship Grants Program Funding Opportunity (NNF)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Women and Minorities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Fields Grant Program (WAMS)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Hispanic-Serving Institutions Education Grants Program (HSI)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Veterinary Services Grant Program (VSGP)</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Socially-Disadvantaged Farmers &amp; Ranchers &amp; Veteran Farmers &amp; Ranchers Program</a></li> </ul>

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## Other Federal and Federally Supported Programs

The following federal resources complement USDA's workforce development opportunities featured in the matrix. This list is not inclusive of all federal programs.

### Department of Labor

Workforce Development Planning

- [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\), Indian and Native American Program](#)
- [American Job Centers](#)
- [DOL Veterans Employment and Training Service \(VETS\) programs](#)
- [Office of Disability Employment Policy](#)
- [Workforce Data Quality Initiative](#)
- [Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act of 2014 \(WIOA\)](#)

Infrastructure and Equipment

- [DOL TAA Training and Other Activities \(TaOA\) Funds](#)
- [Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities \(WORC\)](#)

Industry and Employer Engagement, Entrepreneurship, Local Business Development

- [DOL Veterans Employment and Training Service \(VETS\) programs](#)
- [State Occupational Licensing Review and Reform](#)
- [Office of Disability Employment Policy](#)
- [Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities \(WORC\)](#)
- [Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act of 2014 \(WIOA\)](#)

Education, Training, Apprenticeship

- [Job Corps](#)
- [YouthBuild](#)
- [Apprenticeship Resources for Employers](#)
- [National Rural Water Association Apprenticeship Program](#)
- [Veterans Accelerated Learning for Licensed Occupations Project](#)
- [Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs](#)
- [Senior Community Service Employment program](#)
- [Re-Entry Employment Opportunities Program \(REO\)](#)
- [Senior Community Service Employment Program](#)

- [National Farmworker Jobs Program](#)
- [DOL Veterans Employment and Training Service \(VETS\) programs](#)
- [Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities \(WORC\)](#)
- [Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act of 2014 \(WIOA\)](#)

### Department of Health and Human Services

Infrastructure and Equipment

- [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families \(TANF\)](#)
- [Community Services Block Grants](#)

Education, Training, Apprenticeship

- [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families \(TANF\)](#)
- [Health Profession Opportunity Grant \(HPOG\)](#)
- [Community Services Block Grants](#)
- [NIH Summer Research Education Experience Program](#)

### U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Education, Training, Apprenticeship

- [Jobs Plus Initiative](#)

Infrastructure and Equipment Supporting Workforce Development

- [Jobs Plus Initiative](#)
- [Family Self-Sufficiency Program](#)

### Department of Education

Education, Training, Apprenticeship and Industry and Employer Engagement, Entrepreneurship, Local Business Development

- [Perkins Collaborative Resource Network](#)

### Department of Interior

Education, Training, Apprenticeship

- [Experienced Services Program](#)

### Department of Veteran Affairs

Education, Training, Apprenticeship

- [VA Transition Assistance Program](#)

## Department of Commerce – Economic Development Administration

Workforce Development Planning

- [Planning Program and Local Technical Assistance Program](#)

Infrastructure and Equipment

- [EDA's Regional Innovation Strategies \(RIS\) Program](#)

## Department of Transportation

Infrastructure and Equipment

- [Transportation Workforce Development](#)

## Appalachian Regional Commission

Infrastructure and Equipment

- [ARC POWER \(Partnership for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization\) Initiative](#)

## Additional Resources Available at USDA

- [COVID-19 Federal Rural Resource Guide](#): As the COVID-19 response continues, this resource will help rural leaders navigate opportunities to help strengthen the rural workforce and support recovery efforts for rural businesses. For a comprehensive list of immediate and long-term federal assistance for communities affected by the pandemic, rural community leaders are encouraged to review this guide to help support recovery efforts for rural residents, businesses and communities. For more information on USDA's COVID-19 response, visit [usda.gov/coronavirus](https://usda.gov/coronavirus).
- [e-Connectivity Toolkit: Rural Broadband Resource Guide](#): This resource features 27 USDA programs that support broadband deployment. Each program is organized by customer and project type to help users identify resources that support planning, construction, research and other e-Connectivity projects.
- [Recreation Economy at USDA: Economic Development Resources for Rural Communities](#): This guide addresses key factors necessary to build a sustainable recreational economy including natural resource management, conservation activities, infrastructure investment, business development and more.

- [Collaborating for Prosperity with American Indians and Alaska Natives](#): This resource showcases a complete list of Rural Development programs that help ensure rural families, businesses and communities on America's Tribal lands have the resources they need to prosper.
- [Rural Workforce Innovation Network \(RWIN\)](#): USDA established the RWIN to create a forum for public and private partners to help increase access to workforce opportunities across rural America. This network represents governmental entities, colleges and universities, nonprofit organizations, and private businesses that are actively working to improve workforce development in their local communities. USDA encourages any individual or group that has an interest in improving the workforce in their community to join at [rd.usda.gov/rwin](https://rd.usda.gov/rwin).



## USDA Contact Information

### [USDA Rural Development \(RD\) Programs](#)

Contact your local [RD State Office](#) to learn more about RD loan, grant and technical assistance programs.

### [U.S. Forest Service \(FS\) Programs](#)

Visit the [U.S. Forest Service Programs](#) site to learn more about various job training programs.

### [Farm Service Agency \(FSA\) Programs](#)

Contact your local [FSA Service Center](#) to learn more about programs for farmers and ranchers.

### [National Institute of Food and Agriculture \(NIFA\) Programs](#)

Use the [NIFA grant database](#) to find contacts for NIFA grant programs.

### [USDA Food and Nutrition Service \(FNS\) Programs](#)

Contact your [SNAP State Contact](#) to learn more about Supplemental Nutritional Assistance (SNAP) and Employment Training Programs.

### [USDA's Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement \(OPPE\)](#)

Contact a [Liaison](#) at USDA's OPPE to learn more about partnership opportunities with USDA.



Rural Development  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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