

Rural Development

Rural Utilities Service

Water and Waste Disposal Programs

The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) administers a water and wastewater loan and grant program to improve the quality of life and promote economic development in rural America. RUS is a new Agency created in October 1994 by the reorganization of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The program was previously administered by the Rural Development Administration and the Farmers Home Administration, which were abolished by the reorganization. At the State and local levels, the program is administered by field offices of USDA's Rural Development mission area. RUS is coordinating the Water 2000 initiative, which has as its goal to provide clean, safe and affordable drinking water to all rural homes by the year 2000.

Water and Waste Disposal Direct and Guaranteed Loans

Purpose: Direct loans may be made to develop water and wastewater systems, including solid waste disposal and storm drainage, in rural areas and to cities and towns with a population of 10,000 or less. Funds are available to public entities, such as municipalities, counties, special-purpose districts, and Indian tribes. In addition, funds may be made available to corporations operated on a not-for-profit basis.

Priority will be given to public entities, in areas with less than 5,500 people, to restore a deteriorating water supply, or to improve, enlarge, or modify a water facility or an inadequate waste facility. Also, preference will be given to requests which involve the merging of small facilities and those serving low-income communities. Applicants must be unable to obtain funds from other sources at reasonable rates and terms. The maximum term for all loans is 40 years; however, no repayment period will exceed state statutes or the useful life of the facility. Interest rates may be obtained from Rural Development field offices.

Guaranteed loans may be made for the same purpose as direct loans. They are made and serviced by lenders such as banks and savings and loan associations. Normally, guarantees will not exceed 80 percent on any loss of interest and principal on the loan.

Water and Waste Disposal Grants

Purpose: Reduce water and waste disposal costs to a reasonable level for users of the system. Grants may be made, in some instances, up to 75 percent of eligible project costs. Eligible applicants are the same as for loans.

Technical Assistance and Training Grants

Purpose: Make grants to nonprofit organizations to provide technical assistance and/or training to associations located in rural areas and to cities and towns with a population of 10,000 or less.

Assistance may be provided to identify and evaluate solutions to water and waste disposal problems, to improve the operation and maintenance of existing water and waste disposal facilities, and to assist associations in preparing applications for water and waste disposal facilities.

Solid Waste Management Grants

Purpose: Make grants to public and private nonprofit organizations to provide technical assistance and/or training to associations located in rural areas and to cities and towns with a population of 10,000 or less to reduce or eliminate pollution of water resources, and to improve planning and management of solid waste facilities. Assistance may be provided to enhance operator skills in operations and maintenance, identify threats to water resources, and reduce the solid waste stream.

Rural Water Circuit Rider Technical Assistance

Purpose: Provide on-site technical assistance to help assure cost-effective operation of rural water systems. RUS has assisted rural water systems, via contracting, with day-to-day operational, financial and management problems. The assistance is provided at no charge and may be requested by officials of rural water systems or by Rural Development personnel. It complements supervisory assistance provided by Rural Development personnel.

Applications

Information about the water and waste disposal programs and advice on how to assemble information to determine engineering feasibility, economic soundness, cost estimates, organization, financing and management matters, may be obtained from Rural Development field offices. These offices are usually listed in local telephone directories under "U. S. Department of Agriculture."

For More Information Write

Your local or State USDA Rural Development office (see U.S. Government listing of phone directory), or the National Office at:

USDA Rural Utilities Service
Attention: Dick Mansfield
Stop 1548
Washington, D.C. 20250-1548
Phone: (202) 690-2670
FAX: (202) 720-0718
E-Mail: Dmansfie@rus.usda.gov.

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To file a complaint, write the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250, or call 1-800-245-6340 (voice) or (202) 720-1127 (TDD). USDA is an equal employment opportunity employer.

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