



USDA Rural Development

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April 14, 2015

MEDIA RELEASE

Native American set-aside and non-Native funds available USDA financing available to support rural businesses and create jobs

(April 14, 2015—Phoenix, Arizona) The United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, is now accepting applications for grants to support rural businesses and help create jobs.

Congress established the Rural Business Development Grant program under the 2014 Farm Bill. The new program combines USDA's former Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBE) and Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG) programs. The new program, like its predecessors, is designed to assist with startup or expansion of small and emerging private businesses and/or nonprofits in rural communities. Eligible applicants include public bodies, government entities, Indian tribes and non-profit organizations.

The Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) Native American set-aside will be awarded competitively through a national competition. The Native American set-aside is nearly \$4 million. An additional \$22 million will be allotted among the states for non-set aside applicants.

The grants can be used to provide technical assistance and, in some cases, to establish revolving loan funds; to support rural distance learning programs that provide educational or job training; to acquire or develop land, buildings, plants and equipment; and to build or improve access roads, parking areas, utility extensions, and water and waste disposal facilities. There are no substantive programmatic or operational changes to the RBE and RBOG programs as a result of this consolidation. Grants made before the implementation of the RBDG program will continue to be governed under the applicable RBOG and RBE regulations that were in effect at the time.

Applicants are encouraged to contact Community Economic Development Coordinator Jeff Hays at (928) 759-9301, extension 103 or by email at jeff.hays@az.usda.gov.

The deadline for Native American RBDG applications is May 8 by 4:00 p.m. The deadline for non-Native American applications is June 12 by 4:00 p.m. Additional information can be found on page 15665 of the March 25 Federal Register.

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