

MAINTAIN FUNDING FOR USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

ACTION NEEDED:

Urge your members of Congress to support U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development programs throughout the FY 2022 appropriations process by meeting or exceeding FY 2021 funding levels. USDA Rural Development programs provide critical investments in key rural county priorities.

BACKGROUND:

USDA programs are funded through the annual Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. USDA Rural Development operates a broad range of grant and loan programs critical to rural counties. These programs include grant funding and loan financing for water/wastewater infrastructure, community facilities, broadband, electric, telephone, housing, renewable energy and business development.

In December 2020 Congress passed the FY 2021 spending package that included over \$23 billion in total discretionary funding authority for USDA, including over \$3.8 billion for USDA's Rural Development Programs – a slight decrease of \$50 million over FY 2020 funding levels.

Counties encourage Congress to maintain funding levels at or above FY 2021 levels as it considers appropriations for FY 2022.

Below is a breakdown of FY 2021 funding levels:

Under the USDA Rural Utilities Service (RUS):

- **Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Programs:** \$1.4 billion in funding for direct loans under the Water and Waste Disposal Program – \$50 million below FY 2020 enacted levels – and \$68 million in grants for the Water and Waste Disposal Program, an increase of \$43 million over FY 2019 enacted levels.

USDA PROGRAMS ARE FUNDED THROUGH THE ANNUAL AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS BILL.

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT OPERATES PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE GRANTS AND LOAN FINANCING FOR WATER/WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE, COMMUNITY FACILITIES, BROADBAND, ELECTRIC, TELEPHONE, HOUSING, RENEWABLE ENERGY AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

SOME KEY USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS INCLUDE THE USDA RURAL UTILITIES SERVICE (RUS); THE USDA RURAL HOUSING SERVICE (RHS); AND THE RURAL BUSINESS-COOPERATIVE SERVICE (RBCS).

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This program helps rural communities address the backlog of clean water and waste disposal projects.

- **Distance Learning, Telemedicine, and Broadband Program:** \$690 million for the Rural Telecommunications Program, equal to FY 2020 enacted levels. This funding includes \$60 million for the Distance Learning, Telemedicine and Broadband Program.

Under the USDA Rural Housing Service (RHS):

- **Rural Communities Facilities Program:** \$2.8 billion for the Rural Community Facilities Program, equal to enacted FY 2020 levels. This program helps fund rural hospitals, schools, and health clinics.
- **Single-Family Housing Program:** \$1 billion for the Single-Family Housing Direct Home Loans Program, equal to enacted FY 2020 funding. This program helps provide affordable housing to underserved families in rural communities.

Under the USDA Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBCS):

- **Rural Cooperative Development Grant Program:** \$56.4 million for the Rural Business Development Grant Program, an \$8.6 million decrease from enacted FY 2020 levels. The FY 2021 package also provided \$26.6 million for Rural Cooperative Development Grants. These programs help rural communities create and expand new markets and products through strategic investments.

COVID-19 RESPONSE:

Since the onset of the pandemic, Congress has provided additional funding for USDA Rural Development Programs, including \$45.5 million passed under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act in March 2020.

KEY TALKING POINTS:

- USDA Rural Development operates a broad range of grant and loan programs that are critical to rural counties. These programs include grant funding and loan financing for water/wastewater infrastructure, community facilities, broadband, electric, telephone, housing, renewable energy and business development.
- Urge your member of Congress to support U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development programs throughout the FY 2022 appropriations process by meeting or exceeding FY 2021 funding levels.



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