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**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE****Rural Housing Service****Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the Section 515 Rural Rental Housing Program for Fiscal Year 2003****AGENCY:** Rural Housing Service (RHS), USDA.**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** This NOFA announces the availability of new construction loan funds for the section 515 Rural Rental Housing (RRH) program for Fiscal Year (FY) 2003. By prior notice in the **Federal Register**, the Agency announced a deadline of February 25, 2003, 5 p.m. local time for each Rural Development State Office, for submitting applications for section 515 new construction loan funds and section 521 Rental Assistance (RA). The "Notice of Timeframe to Submit Applications for the Section 515 Rural Rental Housing Program for Fiscal Year 2003" was published in the **Federal Register** on December 27, 2002 (67 FR 79033). This was done prior to passage of a final appropriations act to allow sufficient time for applicants to complete an application and for the Agency to select and process selected applications within the current fiscal year. Detailed information regarding the application and selection process, as well as a listing of the Rural Development State Offices, may be found in the December 27, 2002, notice.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For general information, applicants may contact Linda Armour, Senior Loan Officer, Multi-Family Housing Processing Division, Rural Housing Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Stop 0781, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250, telephone (202) 720-1753 (voice) (this is not a toll free number) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD-Federal Information Relay Service).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****Programs Affected**

The Rural Rental Housing program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under Number 10.415, Rural Rental Housing Loans. Rental Assistance is listed in the Catalog under Number 10.427, Rural Rental Assistance Payments.

**Discussion of Notice***I. Authority and Distribution Methodology***A. Authority**

Section 515 of the Housing Act of 1949 (42 U.S.C. 1485) provides RHS with the authority to make loans to any individual, corporation, association, trust, Indian tribe, public or private nonprofit organization, consumer cooperative, or partnership to provide rental or cooperative housing and related facilities in rural areas for very-low, low, or moderate income persons or families, including elderly persons and persons with disabilities. Rental Assistance (RA) is a tenant subsidy for very-low and low-income families residing in rural rental housing facilities with RHS financing and may be requested with applications for such facilities.

**B. Distribution Methodology**

The total amount available for FY 2003 for section 515 is \$115,052,541, of which \$29,252,541 is available for new construction as follows:

Section 515 new construction funds—  
\$7,145,186  
Set-aside for nonprofits—10,354,728  
Set-aside for Underserved Counties and Colonias—5,752,627  
Set-aside for EZ, EC, and REAP Zones—  
5,000,000  
State Rental Assistance (RA) Designated reserve—1,000,000

**C. Set-asides and State RA Reserve**

1. *Nonprofit set-aside.* An amount of \$10,354,728 has been set aside for nonprofit applicants. Details on this set-aside are provided in the notice published in the **Federal Register** on December 27, 2002.

2. *Underserved counties and colonias set-aside.* An amount of \$5,752,627 has been set aside for loan requests to develop units in the 100 most needy underserved counties or colonias as defined in section 509(f) of the Housing Act of 1949.

3. *EZ, EC, and REAP set-aside.* An amount of \$5,000,000 has been set aside to develop units in EZ, EC, or REAP communities. If requests for this set-aside exceed available funds, selection will be made by point score.

4. *State RA Reserve.* \$1,000,000 is available nationwide in a reserve for States with viable State Rental Assistance (RA) programs. In order to participate, States are to submit specific written information about the State RA program, *i.e.*, a memorandum of understanding, documentation from the provider, etc., to the National Office.

Dated: May 12, 2003.

**Arthur A. Garcia,***Administrator, Rural Housing Service.*

[FR Doc. 03-12244 Filed 5-15-03; 8:45 am]

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**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE****Rural Housing Service****Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) for Section 514 Farm Labor Housing Loans and Section 516 Farm Labor Housing Grants for Off-Farm Housing for Fiscal Year 2003****AGENCY:** Rural Housing Service (RHS), USDA.**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** This NOFA announces the availability of funds for section 514 Farm Labor Housing loan funds and section 516 Farm Labor Housing grant funds for new construction and acquisition and rehabilitation of off-farm units for farmworker households. Applications may also include requests for section 521 rental assistance (RA) and operating assistance for migrant units. By prior notice in the **Federal Register**, the Agency announced a deadline of March 27, 2003, 5 p.m., local time for each Rural Development State Office, for submitting applications for sections 514/516 Farm Labor Housing Loans and Grants and Section 521 Rental Assistance (RA). The "Notice of Timeframe for Section 514 Farm Labor Housing Loans and Section 516 Farm Labor Housing Grants for Off-Farm Housing for Fiscal Year 2003" was published in the **Federal Register** on December 27, 2002 (67 FR 79030). This was done prior to passage of a final appropriations act to allow sufficient time for applicants to complete an application, and for the Agency to select and process selected applications within the current fiscal year. This Notice changes the timeframe to submit applications for the Section 514 Farm Labor Housing Loans and Section 516 Farm Labor Housing Grants for Off-Farm Housing for Fiscal Year 2003 to be August 14, 2003. Detailed information regarding the application and selection process, as well as a listing of the Rural Development State Offices, may be found in the December 27, 2002, notice.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For general information, applicants may contact Mary Fox, Senior Loan Specialist or David Layfield, Senior Loan Specialist, of the Multi-Family Housing Processing Division, Rural Housing Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Stop 0781,

1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250, telephone (202) 720-1624 or (202) 690-0759 (voice) (this is not a toll free number) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD-Federal Information Relay Service).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Programs Affected**

The Farm Labor Housing Program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under Number 10.405, Farm Labor Housing Loans and Grants. Rental Assistance is listed in the Catalog under Number 10.427, Rural Rental Assistance Payments.

**Definitions**

*Farm Labor.* Farm labor includes services in connection with cultivating the soil, raising or harvesting any agriculture or aquaculture commodity; or in catching, netting, handling, planting, drying, packing, grading, storing, or preserving in its unmanufactured state any agriculture or aquaculture commodity; or delivering to storage, market, or a carrier for transportation to market or to process any agricultural or aquacultural commodity.

*Migrant Agricultural Laborers.* Agricultural laborers and family dependents who establish a temporary residence while performing agriculture work at one or more locations away from the place they call home or home base. (This does not include day-haul agricultural workers whose travels are limited to work areas within one day of their work locations.)

*Off-Farm Labor Housing.* Housing for farm laborers regardless of the farm where they work.

**Discussion of Notice**

*I. Authority and Distribution Methodology*

**A. Authority**

The Farm Labor Housing program is authorized by the Housing Act of 1949: Section 514 (42 U.S.C. 1484) for loans and section 516 (42 U.S.C. 1486) for grants. Tenant subsidies (rental assistance (RA)) are available through section 521 (42 U.S.C. 1490a). Sections 514 and 516 provide RHS the authority to make loans and grants for financing off-farm housing to broad-based nonprofit organizations, nonprofit organizations of farmworkers, federally recognized Indian tribes, agencies or political subdivisions of State or local government, public agencies (such as local housing authorities) and with section 514 loans to nonprofit limited partnerships in which the general partner is a nonprofit entity.

**B. Distribution Methodology**

Because RHS has the ability to adjust loan and grant levels, final loan and grant levels will fluctuate. The estimated funds available for fiscal year (FY) 2003 for off-farm housing are: Section 514 loans—\$30,480,202 Section 516 grants—13,198,209

**c. Section 514 and Section 516 Funds**

Section 514 loan funds and section 516 grant funds will be distributed to States based on a national competition, as follows:

1. States will accept, review, and score requests in accordance with 7 CFR part 1944, subpart D. The scoring factors are:

(a) The presence and extent of leveraged assistance, including donated land, for the units that will serve program-eligible tenants, calculated as a percentage of the RHS total development cost (TDC). RHS TDC excludes non-RHS eligible costs such as a developer's fee. Leveraged assistance includes, but is not limited to, funds for hard construction costs, section 8 or other non-RHS tenant subsidies, and state or federal funds. A minimum of ten percent leveraged assistance is required to earn points; however, if the total percentage of leveraged assistance is less than ten percent and the proposal includes donated land, two points will be awarded for the donated land. Points will be awarded in accordance with the following table. (0 to 20 points)

Percentage	Points
75 or more .....	20
60-74 .....	18
50-59 .....	16
40-49 .....	12
30-39 .....	10
20-29 .....	8
10-19 .....	5
0-9 .....	0
Donated land in proposals with less than ten percent total leveraged assistance .....	2

(b) Seasonal, temporary, migrant housing. (5 points for up to and including 50 percent of the units; 10 points for 51 percent or more.)

(c) The selection criteria contained in 7 CFR part 1944, subpart D includes one optional criteria set by the National Office. The National office initiative will be used in the selection criteria as follows:

Up to 10 Points will be awarded based on the presence of and extent to which a tenant services plan exists that clearly outlines services that will be provided to the residents of the proposed project. These services may include but are not limited to: Transportation related services, on-site English as a Second

Language (ESL) classes, move-in funds, emergency assistance funds, homeownership counseling, food pantries, after school tutoring, and computer learning centers. Two points will be awarded for each resident service included in the tenant services plan up to a maximum of 10 points. Plans must detail how the services are to be administered, who will administer them, and where they will be administered. All tenant service plans must include letters of intent that clearly state the service that will be provided at the project for the benefit of the residents from any party administering each service, including the applicant. (0 to 10 points)

2. States will conduct preliminary eligibility review, score applications, and forward to the National Office.

3. The National office will rank all requests nationwide and distribute funds to States in rank order, within funding and RA limits. In case of point-score ties in the National ranking, first preference will be given to a preapplication to develop units in a state that does not have existing RHS-financed off-farm LH units; second preference to a preapplication will be from a State that has not yet been selected in the current funding cycle. In the event there are multiple preapplications in either category, one preapplication from each State (the highest State-ranked) will compete by computer-based random lottery. If necessary, the process will be completed until all same-pointed preapplications are selected or funds are exhausted.

**II. Funding Limits**

A. Individual requests may not exceed \$3 million (total loan and grant).

B. No State may receive more than 30 percent of the total available funds unless an exception is granted from the Administrator.

C. Rental Assistance and Operating Assistance will be held in the National office for use with section 514 loans and section 516 grants and will be awarded based on each project's financial structure and need.

**III. Application Process**

All applications for sections 514 and 516 funds must be filed with the appropriate Rural Development State office and must meet the requirements of 7 CFR part 1944, subpart D, and section IV of this NOFA. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed and will be returned to the applicant. No application will be accepted after 5 p.m., local time, on August 14, 2003 unless date and time is extended by another Notice published in the **Federal Register**.

#### IV. Application Submission Requirements

A. Each application shall include all of the information, materials, forms and exhibits required by 7 CFR part 1944, subpart D, as well as comply with the provisions of this NOFA. Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to include a check list and to have their applications indexed and tabbed to facilitate the review process. The Rural Development State office will base its determination of completeness of the application and the eligibility of each applicant on the information provided in the application.

B. Applicants are advised to contact the Rural Development State office serving the place in which they desire to submit an application for application information.

Dated: May 12, 2003.

**Arthur A. Garcia,**

*Administrator, Rural Housing Service.*

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#### DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

##### Rural Housing Service

#### Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the Section 538 Guaranteed Rural Rental Housing Program (GRRHP) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2003

**AGENCY:** Rural Housing Service (RHS), USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** This NOFA announces the availability of funds for the section 538 Guaranteed Rural Rental Housing Program for FY 2003. Congress appropriated \$99.350 million to the section 538 GRRHP for FY 2003. All applicants that submitted responses to a prior section 538 GRRHP notice published in the **Federal Register** on December 27, 2002 (67 FR 79038) and the correction to the notice published in the **Federal Register** on January 28, 2003 (68 FR 4166) will be considered for FY 2003 funding. The commitment of program dollars will be made to applicants of selected responses that have fulfilled the necessary requirements for obligation as described in the notice published in the **Federal Register** on December 27, 2002 (67 FR 79038).

The Agency will continue to review eligible responses from eligible applicants as described in the notice published in the **Federal Register** on December 27, 2002 (67 FR 79038) and the correction to the notice published in the **Federal Register** on January 28,

2003 (68 FR 4166) until all funds are expended. The Agency will issue a notice to inform the public when funds have been exhausted for FY 2003.

Dated: May 12, 2003.

**Arthur A. Garcia,**

*Administrator, Rural Housing Service.*

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#### DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

##### Rural Housing Service

#### Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) for Section 533 Housing Preservation Grants for Fiscal Year (FY) 2003

**AGENCY:** Rural Housing Service (RHS), USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** This NOFA announces the availability of funds for section 533 Housing Preservation Grant (HPG) Program. By prior notice in the **Federal Register**, the Agency announced a deadline of March 27, 2003, 5 p.m., local time for each Rural Development State Office, for submitting applications for Section 533 Housing Preservation Grant Program. The "Notice of Timeframe for the section 533 Housing Preservation Grants for Fiscal Year 2003" was published in the **Federal Register** on December 27, 2002 (67 FR 79036). This was done prior to passage of a final appropriations act to allow sufficient time for applicants to complete an application and for the Agency to select and process selected applications within the current fiscal year. Detailed information regarding the application and selection process, as well as a listing of the Rural Development State Offices, may be found in the December 27, 2002, Notice.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For general information, applicants may contact Mary Fox, Senior Loan Officer, Multi-Family Housing Processing Division, Rural Housing Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Stop 0781, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250, telephone (202) 720-1624 (voice) (this is not a toll free number) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD—Federal Information Relay Service).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Programs Affected

This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under Number 10.433, Rural Housing Preservation Grants. This program is subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372 which requires intergovernmental consultation with

State and local officials (7 CFR part 3015, subpart V). Applicants are referred to 7 CFR 1944.674 and 1944.676(f), (g), and (h) for specific guidance on these requirements relative to the HPG program.

#### Discussion of Notice

##### I. Authority and Distribution Methodology

###### A. Authority

The HPG program is a grant program which provides qualified public agencies, private nonprofit organizations, and other eligible entities grant funds to assist very low- and low-income homeowners to repair and rehabilitate their homes in rural areas, and to assist rental property owners and cooperative housing complexes to repair and rehabilitate their units if they agree to make such units available to low- and very low-income persons. This action is taken to comply with Agency regulations found in 7 CFR part 1944, subpart N, which requires the Agency to announce the opening and closing dates for receipt of preapplications for HPG funds from eligible applicants. The intended effect of this Notice is to provide eligible organizations notice of these dates.

###### B. Distribution Methodology

The funding instrument for the HPG program will be a grant agreement. The term of the grant can vary from 1 to 2 years, depending on available funds and demand. No maximum or minimum grant levels have been established at the National level. You should contact the State office to determine the allocation and the State maximum grant level, if any. For FY 2003, \$9,935,000 is available for the Housing Preservation Grant Program. A set aside of \$596,100 has been established for grants located in Empowerment Zones, Enterprise Communities, and REAP Zones, \$997,400 has been set aside for the Administrator's reserve and \$8,341,500 has been distributed under a formula allocation to States pursuant to 7 CFR part 1940, subpart L, "Methodology and Formulas for Allocation of Loan and Grant Program Funds." Decisions on funding will be based on preapplications.

Dated: May 12, 2003.

**Arthur A. Garcia,**

*Administrator, Rural Housing Service.*

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