

**Obama Administration Supporting Rural Schools Across Federal Agencies**

Below are examples of targeted programs and opportunities offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture that could provide additional support for high-need rural communities:

(SOURCE: U.S. Department of Agriculture, December 2011)

Construction & Housing	Details	Examples
<p><b>USDA</b>  <a href="#">Community Facilities Program</a></p>	<p><b>FY2011 Funding:</b>            \$290 million – Direct Loans            \$168 million – Guaranteed Loans            \$15 million– Grants Program</p> <p><b>ARRA:</b> Huge increase in educational facilities due to \$1.3 billion ARRA investment for Community Facilities Program. As a result, assistance increased dramatically in FY2010.</p> <p><b>FY2010:</b> 478 educational facilities were built or improved for more than \$394 million</p> <p><b>FY2009:</b> 259 educational facilities for \$160 million.</p>	<p><b>North Florida Community College</b> -- In Florida, the City of Madison leveraged \$387,000 in USDA Community Facilities grant money with funding acquired from local partners, including \$72,665 from the City of Madison, \$72,665 from Madison County, and \$27,500 from North Florida Community College.</p> <p>By working together in partnership, the city now has an essential piece of equipment that is always on call for city or county emergencies. During downtime, the ladder truck serves as an educational tool in a fire fighter training program at North Florida Community College.</p> <p><b>Blackfeet Community College</b> – In Browning, MT, Blackfeet Community College (BCC) used the Community Facilities guaranteed loan program for replacement facilities.</p> <p>The tribal college received a \$2.9 million guaranteed loan awarded through the Blackfeet National Bank for construction of a new 24,000 sq. ft. student service and classroom facility. The facility will feature a student lounge, bookstore, eight classrooms, faculty offices, mentor and tutor centers, tribal business information center, and offices for the dean of students, financial aid, and the registrar.</p> <p>Blackfeet National Bank worked out a partnership relationship with Washington County Bank in the St. Paul, Minnesota area. Blackfeet National Bank was the lead bank on the loan, which is supported with a 90 percent guaranteed loan from USDA Rural Development.</p>

<b>Housing</b>		
<p><a href="#">USDA Rural Housing Service (RHS)</a></p>	<p><b>FY2011 Budget Funding:</b>  \$1.1 billion – Direct Loans  \$24 billion – Guaranteed Loans  Single Family Direct loans are limited to families with incomes less than 80 percent of area median income.  ** RHS is the only Federal agency that provides direct loans for this purpose.</p> <p>Guaranteed loans are limited to families with incomes up to 115% of area median income. The interest rate on these loans is negotiated between the borrower and the private lender.</p>	<p><b>Missouri School Teacher</b> -- In Urbana, MO, Ms. Carolina George is a bi-lingual teacher with a Master’s Degree in reading. In her 7th year teaching in Missouri, Carolina teaches high school Spanish and is the school Librarian in an under-served area. She is a single mother of a 9-year-old son and wanted to live closer to where she teaches. Working with the USDA Rural Development state office, Carolina applied for the 502 Direct Home Loan Program. The home is an older home needing a little work. First, she removed the old carpet. To her delight there are beautiful hard wood floors underneath. Also, the roof was replaced.</p> <p>Dallas County is a very low income county (\$29,300 AMI for a family of 2). After deductions for child care and for each child in the household, she qualified for a 33-year Direct Loan, 100% financing and no down payment with an interest rate of 4.25% to purchase the home for \$78,000.</p> <p><b>GETTING STARTED:</b> To access the USDA Rural Development Housing and Community Facilities Programs, school districts should contact their local Rural Development office or the <a href="#">USDA Rural Development State Director’s Office in their state</a>.</p>
<b>Technology</b>		
<p><a href="#">USDA Distance Learning and Telemedicine loans and grants program</a></p>	<p><b>FY2011 Funding:</b>  \$25 million  The DLT program was designed specifically to meet the educational and health care needs of rural America.</p> <p>Through competitive grants, advanced telecommunications technologies provide enhanced learning opportunities for rural residents.</p>	<p><b>Coconino Community College</b> -- In July 2011, Coconino Community College (CCC) of Arizona received a Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Grant for \$305,833 to replace outdated equipment with high-definition videoconferencing equipment. Upgraded equipment, enhanced distance learning services, Interactive TV (ITV) Technology, and instructional television, allow students at the rural distance learning location to take college courses that are taught from another site such as CCC’s Lone Tree or Fourth Street campuses in Flagstaff.</p> <p>The grant allows rural students to complete Arizona General Education Curriculum pre-requisites in both the arts and lab sciences without having to relocate.</p>

		<p>Because the new equipment delivers a very high resolution image, ITV courses not previously possible such as American Sign Language are now available.</p> <p>In addition to being able to complete general education requirements in the Arts and Sciences with ITV, remote students may qualify for <i>CCC2NAU</i>, an innovative college access program providing a smooth, seamless transfer from the community college to university.</p> <p><b>Association of Computer Technology Educators of Maine (USDA DLT Grant of \$498,494 with \$308,439 in matching contribution.)</b> This Distance Learning project provides video conferencing facilities to 25 schools in 18 communities in southern Maine. These are used in conjunction with video conferencing centers installed at the University of Maine in Orono to provide elementary and high school courses in addition to college-level coursework. This eliminates the time and expense of travelling to college campuses, as was previously required to pursue college and career training. It also makes advanced classes available to more students.</p>
<b>Broadband</b>		
<b>USDA</b> Broadband deployment	<b>American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)</b> \$2.5 billion <b>FY2011 Funding –</b> \$400 million (Direct Loans)	When complete, USDA expects that its investments will bring broadband access to an estimated 1.2 million households, roughly 7 million Americans benefitting, 230,000 businesses, and nearly 8,000 anchor institutions like hospitals and libraries.
<b>USDA</b> <a href="#">Community Connect Program</a>	<b>FY2011 Funding:</b> \$13.4 million  The Community Connect program serves rural communities where broadband service is least likely to be available, but where it can make a tremendous difference in the quality of life for citizens.	<b>Air Advantage in Michigan</b> -- The Great Lakes Bay Region and Thumb Area in Michigan were in need of broadband infrastructure to allow the community to compete in the global marketplace. In addition to lack of broadband services necessary for local businesses to operate, schools needed an internet connection for students in the classroom and at their homes. Using multiple USDA Community Connect loans and grants since 2002, Air Advantage is now delivering broadband services to nearly 5,000 customers in its 3,500 square mile service area using 350 miles of wireless network backbone.

	The projects funded by the grants help rural residents tap into the enormous potential of the Internet.	The 65 towers transmit information that reaches households, six hospitals, and 18 school districts where students have at least 17 distance learning courses at any given time.
<b>Cost Savings</b>		
<b>USDA</b> Forest Service	<b><a href="#">Fuels for Schools Program</a></b> promotes and encourages the use of wood biomass as a renewable natural resource to provide a clean, readily available energy source suitable for heat and power generation in public and private buildings. This program also facilitates the removal of hazardous fuels from the forests by assisting in the development of viable commercial uses of removed material. Projects save schools 25-percent and more on heating costs	<b>Montana</b> After wildfires in the summer of 2000, which burned over 350,000 acres and 70 structures in the Bitterroot Valley of Montana, a resident of Darby, Montana began to research ways in which to tie fire hazard reduction work with economic development in the valley. He discovered that waste wood was being used to heat a number of schools in the northeastern U.S., and approached community leaders with the idea of using slash (tree limbs, tops and branches) from hazardous fuels reduction projects for heat in Darby's schools. With a grant from the USDA Forest Service and assistance from the Bitter Root RC&D, a biomass boiler system was planned, designed and installed at Darby and began heating their three schools in 2003. <i>The program is born:</i> State & Private Forestry personnel in the Northern and Intermountain Regions of the USDA Forest Service decided to focus their Economic Action Program funding on the Fuels for Schools Initiative. This program is available into other areas of the country where there are viable projects.
<b>Transportation</b>		
<b>USDA</b> <a href="#">Community Facilities Program</a>	<b>School bus replacement</b> Grants and loans are available for the purchase of equipment, including school buses. <b>FY2011 Funding</b> (same as above): \$290 million – Direct Loans \$168 million – Guaranteed Loans \$15 million– Grants Program	<b>Mississippi</b> USDA awarded a \$54,200 grant to Institute of Community Services, Inc. to purchase a school bus for a head-start center.