



United States Department of Agriculture

USDA Accomplishments 2009-2011

Secretary Tom Vilsack

Rural Economic and Community Development

The Obama administration and USDA have made historic investments in America's rural communities, helping create jobs today while building thriving economies for the long term.

Business and Community Development

- Provided over 12,000 grants and loans to assist over 50,000 rural small businesses in creating or saving 266,000 jobs. Used \$1.4 billion in government funds to provide nearly \$7 billion in loans and grants to help rural businesses expand, grow and innovate.
- Invested in over 6,250 critical community facilities projects, reaching nearly 29 million rural residents, including 736 education facilities, 433 libraries, 581 health care facilities, and 2,800 public safety facilities.
- Helped 456,000 rural families in more than 21,000 communities buy or refinance a home.

Critical Infrastructure

- Invested in new and improved broadband service for nearly seven million rural residents, 364,000 rural businesses, and 32,000 community facilities, saving or creating over 25,000 jobs while expanding access to state-of-the-art health care, educational and cultural resources and providing the opportunity for local businesses to compete in the global economy.
- Helped improve and modernize rural electric infrastructure for over 25 million rural residents and businesses with funding for 43,000 miles of new distribution line and 38,000 miles of upgraded line. Also invested in renewable energy, smart grid technology and air quality improvement technologies.

- Invested in 5,100 water and waste water community infrastructure projects to help safeguard the health of 18 million rural residents and create or save 135,000 jobs.
- Invested in distance learning and telemedicine opportunities for 1,440 schools and 3,925 medical facilities, improving the availability of quality health care and educational in rural America.
- Worked across the federal government to increase access to capital for firms in rural communities, including co-hosting regional roundtables with the Small Business Administration and reforming administrative processes to increase the use of community development finance institutions.
- Agriculture Secretary Vilsack chairs President Obama's White House Rural Council – a first-of-its-kind effort to help build on the Administration's robust economic strategy for rural America and make sure that continued federal investments in rural communities create maximum benefit for rural Americans. The Council is working break down silos and find areas for better collaboration and improved flexibility in government programs and works closely with local governments, non-profits and private companies to leverage federal support.

Promoting New Strategies for Economic Growth

- USDA worked to support locally led regional efforts across the nation so that rural places can use the region's assets to collaborate, increase productivity and create a more vibrant future. USDA is currently working with over 50 such regions through our Great Regions effort and other programs. And we are working collaboratively to support the regional work of other federal agencies through the Partnership for Sustainable Communities.
- Today, nearly 90% of all persistently poor counties in America are rural, containing nearly 30% of the population of rural America. To support counties suffering from poverty on a persistent basis, USDA has devoted staff and resources in 134 counties in Arkansas, Mississippi and Georgia as part of a Strike Force Initiative to better coordinate efforts to promote economic development in these areas. The initiative is being expanded into counties in Colorado, New Mexico and Nevada.

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