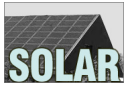


USDA Seeks Lender's to Participate in the Loan Guarantee Program

Written by USDA

Friday, 05 February 2016 10:50 - Last Updated Friday, 05 February 2016 12:00



REAP Program Helps to Finance Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Projects.

STEVENS POINT, WI - The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development recently announced that rural agricultural producers and small business owners can now apply for resources to purchase and install renewable energy systems or make energy efficiency improvements. These efforts help to save money on energy bills, reduce America's dependence on foreign oil, support a clean energy economy, and cut carbon pollution.

USDA is now accepting [Rural Energy for America Program \(REAP\)](#) applications for loan guarantees to help finance the cost of renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvements.

Eligible agricultural producers and rural small businesses may use REAP funds to purchase and install renewable energy systems that incorporate commercially available technology. This includes renewable energy from wind, solar, small hydropower, hydrogen, geothermal and renewable biomass (including anaerobic digesters). Eligible energy efficiency improvement projects include lighting, heating, cooling, ventilation, fans, automated controls, manufacturing equipment and insulation upgrades that reduce energy consumption.

Through the REAP loan guarantees, USDA Rural Development may guarantee up to 85 percent of a commercial loan. Rates and terms are negotiated with the lender, and subject to USDA approval. Loan assistance may cover up to 75 percent of eligible project costs. Maximum loan amount is \$25 million. Lender benefits include mitigating risk, expanding portfolio, and secondary market sales.

For application deadlines and details on how to apply, contact the USDA Rural Development Energy Coordinator for Wisconsin, Brenda Heinen at 715-345-7610 or via e-mail at brenda.heinen@wi.usda.gov

. Information is also available in the October 6 Federal Register, page 60349.

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The REAP program was created in the 2002 Farm Bill. Because of the success of the program, Congress reauthorized the program in the 2014 Farm Bill with guaranteed funding of no less than \$50 million annually for the duration of the five-year bill. The 2014 Farm Bill builds on historic economic gains in rural America over the past seven years while achieving meaningful reform and billions of dollars in savings for taxpayers.

Through the REAP program, USDA has supported nearly 11,000 renewable energy and energy efficiency projects nationwide since 2009. The Department has provided more than \$367 million in grants and \$354 million in loan guarantees to agricultural producers and rural small business owners during this period.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs in a way that will support increasing economic opportunity and improve the quality of life of rural residents. As the lead federal agency for rural development needs, USDA Rural Development can help rural communities and regions grow and prosper by offering a variety of financial and technical assistance programs that encourage the development of strong community and economic development strategies.

During this past year, USDA Rural Development's nearly \$577 million investment in Wisconsin helped create or retain more than 1,560 jobs, aided 3,034 families in buying their own homes and assisted more than 45 communities as they made improvements to their facilities, services, and infrastructure.

Further information on USDA Rural Development is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting the web site at www.rd.usda.gov/wi .

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