

USDA Invests \$285,000 in Wisconsin

Written by USDA

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Grants Awarded to Help Rural Businesses Create Jobs and Increase Economic Opportunities. \$20 Million Awarded Nationwide.

STEVEN POINT, WI - Last week, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack awarded nearly \$20 million through 385 grants to help support the start-up or expansion of rural small businesses. Ten of the grants, totaling \$575,000, are being awarded to organizations serving rural Wisconsin.

"These grants will strengthen the economic fabric of our rural small towns and communities by providing capital to small and emerging businesses," Vilsack said.

USDA is awarding the grants through the Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) program. Recipients may use the funds to provide technical assistance, training, and job-creation activities.

Wisconsin projects include:

- Easter Seals Wisconsin, Inc. (Madison) - \$21,000 grant to work one on one with disabled entrepreneurs to evaluate their self-employment ideas for potential start-up businesses.
- Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council Inc. (Lac Du Flambeau) - \$99,999 grant to provide technical assistance to Native American business owners of eight Wisconsin Tribes.
- Indianhead Community Action Agency, Inc. (Ladysmith) - \$47,975 grant to provide technical assistance and training to small and emerging businesses in northwestern Wis.
- NiiJii Capital Partners, Inc. (Keshena) - \$73,800 grant to provide technical assistance to Native American business owners of three Wisconsin Tribes.

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- Northwoods NiiJii Enterprise Community, Inc. (Lac Du Flambeau) - \$99,000 grant to provide technical assistance to Native American artists and performers owning small and emerging businesses of three Wisconsin Tribes.
- Oconto County Economic Development Corporation, Inc. (Oconto) – Two grants; a \$44,012 grant to establish a revolving loan fund to assist small and emerging businesses in Oconto County and a \$21,000 grant to conduct a feasibility study for a business incubator facility.
- Vernon Economic Development Association (Viroqua) - \$43,680 grant to provide technical assistance to small, rural businesses located in the Food Enterprise Center in Viroqua, WI.
- Wisconsin Business Innovation Corporation (Spooner) - \$57,500 grant to provide technical assistance to help small and emerging private businesses in northwestern Wis.
- Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (Milwaukee) - \$67,034 grant to provide technical assistance to help small and emerging private businesses in a 12-county area of the state.

Funding of each award announced today is contingent upon the recipient meeting the terms of the grant agreement.

USDA's Rural Business Development Grant Program is one of several that support rural economic development. Since the start of the Obama administration, USDA's Rural Business & Cooperative Programs have helped 85,000 rural businesses.

USDA Rural Development's funding continues to have a dramatic impact on rural communities across Wisconsin. Since 2010, USDA Rural Development has invested more than \$3.5 billion on essential public facilities, small and emerging businesses, water and sewer systems, and housing opportunities in rural Wisconsin communities.

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

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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 \$571 million investment in Wisconsin helped create or retain nearly 1,380 jobs, aided 3,600 families in buying their own homes and assisted more than 50 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 <http://www.rd.usda.gov/wi>.