

THE RURAL REPORT | JUL 21 2026

Updates on Federal Action and Funding Opportunities
Supporting Development in Rural Communities

Rollins Defends Farm Aid as House Republicans Debate \$12 Billion Package

Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins met with House Republicans last week to defend the Trump administration's agricultural agenda as the House prepares to vote on a proposed \$12 billion farm aid package included in a broader \$95 billion budget resolution. During a meeting with the Republican Study Committee, Rollins emphasized the administration's focus on expanding domestic and international market access, reducing input costs, and improving long-term farm profitability to lessen producers' reliance on federal assistance. The resolution faces uncertainty in the House as fiscal conservatives push for spending offsets, while many agricultural stakeholders argue the funding may not be sufficient to address ongoing financial pressures ahead of harvest season. Discussions also highlighted broader issues affecting rural America, including trade policy, permitting reform, and support for specialty crop producers, underscoring the continued debate over balancing short-term relief with long-term agricultural competitiveness.

Concerns Continue Over USDA Reorganization and Agency Capacity

Concerns continue to grow over the Trump administration's USDA reorganization as additional details emerge about its impact on research and workforce capacity. The Forest Service is evaluating the closure of 57 offices, including roughly 20 facilities involved in wildfire prevention, prescribed fire, forest health, and climate adaptation research. While USDA maintains that research will be consolidated - not eliminated - and that savings will support frontline priorities like firefighting, former agency scientists, local governments, and employee unions warn the changes could weaken long-term wildfire preparedness by disrupting field-based research and accelerating the loss of experienced personnel. Meanwhile, USDA has notified more than one-third of its Foreign Agricultural Service workforce that they will be required to relocate to regional hubs as part of the broader reorganization. The move affects staff responsible for agricultural trade promotion, export market development, and the Food for Peace program, prompting concerns that relocation-related attrition could reduce the department's expertise at a time when producers are facing growing trade and market uncertainties.

Funding Opportunities

[Unleashing Tribal Energy Development](#)

U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)

Under this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), the DOE Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs is soliciting applications to advance affordable, reliable, and secure energy development of Tribal energy resources for the benefit of Tribes and their members. ***Application deadline: 7/24/2026***

[Electric Infrastructure Loan & Loan Guarantee Program](#)

U.S. Department of Agriculture

USDA Rural Development provides insured loans and loan guarantees to nonprofit and cooperative associations, public bodies, and other utilities. Insured loans primarily finance the construction of electric distribution facilities in rural areas. ***Application deadline: Open***

[Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program](#)

U.S. Department of Agriculture

USDA Rural Development provides funding for clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage and solid waste disposal, and storm water drainage to households and businesses in eligible rural areas. ***Application deadline: Open***

[Community Facilities Direct Loan Program](#)

U.S. Department of Agriculture

USDA Rural Development provides affordable funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas. Projects include fire and rescue stations, town halls, health care clinics and hospitals. ***Application deadline: Open***

[Community Facilities Guaranteed Loan Program](#)

U.S. Department of Agriculture

USDA Rural Development provides loan guarantees to eligible lenders to develop essential community facilities (CF) in rural areas. Examples of community facilities include health care facilities, buildings like town halls, and public safety facilities such as fire departments. ***Application deadline: Open***

[Timber Production and Expansion Guaranteed Loan Program \(TPEP\)](#)

U.S. Department of Agriculture

USDA Rural Development provides financial support to qualified lenders whose loan applicants want to establish, reopen, expand, or improve a sawmill or other wood processing facility that process ecosystem restoration byproducts from USDA Forest Service National Forest System lands. ***Application deadline: Accepted until funds are expended.***

[Targeted Technical Assistance for Rural Hospitals Program](#)

Health Resources & Services Administration

A federally funded initiative that offers comprehensive technical assistance to rural hospitals to address financial and operational challenges and maintain essential health services for their communities. ***Application Deadline: Rolling Basis***