

# THE RURAL REPORT | APR 21 2026

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

## **House GOP Prepares for Farm Bill Push**

House Republican leadership is ramping up efforts to secure votes for the long-awaited farm bill ahead of a planned floor vote during the week of April 27. GOP leaders are urging members to support the measure, emphasizing that it is budget-neutral and focused on “responsible spending on agriculture.” The notice from the Majority Whip’s office highlights provisions aimed at boosting rural investment, restoring science-based forest management, increasing regulatory certainty in interstate commerce, strengthening Buy American requirements for school meals, and restricting foreign ownership of U.S. farmland.

Despite these efforts, divisions within the Republican conference persist, particularly over provisions that would limit state-level regulations on pesticide labeling and livestock sales - issues that have sparked controversy among members. The bill was reported out of the House Agriculture Committee with bipartisan support, but ongoing disagreements tied to nutrition programs and climate-related policies have stalled broader negotiations. Ag committee chair Thompson (R-PA) indicated he does not anticipate delays tied to other legislative disputes, signaling leadership’s intent to move forward with the vote as scheduled.

## **USDA Secretary Testifies on FY27 Budget Request**

Last week, members of the House Agriculture appropriations subcommittee highlighted sharp partisan divides over rural policy while acknowledging ongoing stress in the farm economy. Subcommittee chair Andy Harris (R-MD) backed Secretary Rollins’ focus on fiscal restraint, deregulation, trade expansion, and modernization, emphasizing efforts to lower input costs, strengthen domestic production, and treat “farm security as national security.” Committee Democrats warned that proposed cuts to research, rural development, staffing, and nutrition programs could exacerbate financial strain, food insecurity, and service gaps.

Member questions also highlighted implementation challenges ranging from specialty crop aid and disaster relief to rural housing, avian flu response, and program access. Both sides of the committee raised concerns over input costs, market pressures, and workforce issues, signaling continued oversight and potential bipartisan engagement as the appropriations process moves forward.

# Funding Opportunities

## [Community Wood Grant Program](#)

### **U.S. Forest Service**

U.S. Forest Service awards funding to shovel-ready projects to install a community wood energy system or build an innovative wood product facility. **Application deadline: 4/22/2026**

## [Value-Added Producer Grants](#)

### **U.S. Department of Agriculture**

USDA Rural Development helps U.S. agricultural producers enter into value-added activities. These grants support either: Planning activities (e.g., feasibility studies, business and marketing plans). Working capital needs (e.g., processing, packaging, advertising, inventory, and salaries). **Application deadline: 4/22/2026**

## [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 processes ecosystem restoration byproducts from USDA Forest Service National Forest System lands. **Application deadline: Accepted until funds are expended.**