

# THE RURAL REPORT | JUL 7 2026

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

## **Trump Administration Moves to Rescind Biden-Era Livestock Competition Rules**

The Trump administration is preparing to rescind three Biden-era regulations designed to strengthen competition and fairness in livestock and poultry markets under the Packers and Stockyards Act, signaling another shift in federal agricultural policy. The targeted rules would have increased protections for farmers and ranchers against retaliation by large meatpacking companies, improved transparency in poultry grower contracts, and reformed poultry payment systems. While the administration has increasingly criticized consolidation in the agricultural sector as a driver of higher food prices, USDA's latest regulatory agenda instead proposes eliminating these regulations, arguing they impose unnecessary burdens on industry. Producer groups and antitrust advocates contend the rollback could weaken protections for independent farmers and undermine broader efforts to increase competition in meat processing, while meat and poultry companies have long argued the rules would raise costs and add regulatory complexity. The rescissions highlight the ongoing debate over the federal government's role in balancing market competition, producer protections, and regulatory burden across the agricultural economy.

## **Legal Challenge Intensifies Over USDA Reorganization Plans**

A coalition of labor unions and advocacy organizations is seeking to block USDA's reorganization after newly disclosed internal planning documents revealed the agency expects to reduce its workforce by approximately 23%, with many employees anticipated to resign rather than relocate. Filed as part of ongoing litigation in federal court, the documents show USDA expects a significant number of employees to decline geographic reassignments as roughly 2,600 Washington-area positions move to regional hubs across the country. The department has indicated that employees who refuse relocation will effectively separate from federal service and that additional workforce reductions could be considered after evaluating participation in voluntary buyout programs. Opponents argue the reorganization is designed to substantially shrink the agency rather than improve efficiency, while the outcome of the legal challenge could have significant implications for USDA's staffing, operations, and service delivery in the months ahead.



# 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 stormwater 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.***

## [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***