

THE RURAL REPORT | AUG 19 2025

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

House Ag Leaders Meet to Discuss Skinny Farm Bill

House Agriculture Committee Chair G.T. Thompson (R-PA) and ranking member Angie Craig (D-MN) were in Stillwater, Minnesota, yesterday for the Minnesota Ag Leadership Conference and their first in-person meeting since huddling in Washington last month to discuss Thompson's plans for "Farm Bill 2.0" – increasingly being referred to as the "skinny" or "no cost" farm bill. The monikers refer to the proposal that the bill may not include any new funding – and instead just reauthorize expiring programs – after Republicans' One Big Beautiful Bill Act provided \$67 billion in farm assistance last month. Thompson insists that the farm bill must be bipartisan, but Democrats may be hesitant to cooperate after SNAP cuts in the GOP megabill.

USDA Plans Regulatory Changes to Align with Trump Administration Agenda

The Agriculture Department plans to advance a slate of rules and regulations next year that align with President Donald Trump's efforts to cut red tape and roll back diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, according to the department's unified agenda that was published last week but later scrubbed. The final and proposed rules span USDA's vast functions, from how the department collects data on food aid recipients to its rural broadband and housing initiatives to rolling back conservation protections in America's largest national forest. Some of the planned changes include:

- Revising data collection methods for SNAP to let state agencies use "visual observation" to collect race and ethnicity data when that information is not voluntarily provided by participants
- Requiring that people seeking federal assistance for multi-family housing through the Rural Housing Service show proof of U.S. citizenship
- Reinstallation of a 2020 rule that revoked Roadless Rule protections in Alaska's Tongass National Forest to be applied to all Forest Service lands.
- Implementation of disaster relief programs for livestock, milk, and uninsured crop losses.

Funding Opportunities

[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

[On-Farm Labor Housing Loans](#)

U.S. Department of Agriculture

USDA Rural Development provides low-interest loans to eligible borrowers to develop or rehabilitate rental housing for very-low- to moderate-income farm laborers. **Application deadline: Open until funds are**

depleted

[USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program](#)

U.S. Department of Agriculture

USDA Rural Development supports zero-interest loans and grants for current and former eligible Rural Utilities Service borrowers who then use the funds to help local businesses finance projects that create/retain jobs or support community facility projects. **Application Deadline: Quarterly**

[Intermediary Relending Program](#)

U.S. Department of Agriculture

USDA Rural Development provides funds to local lenders or “intermediaries” that re-lend to businesses to improve economic conditions and create new opportunities in rural communities. **Application deadline:**

Quarterly

[Community Facilities Programs](#)

U.S. Department of Agriculture

USDA Rural Development provides funding to develop or improve essential public services and facilities. Projects include fire and rescue stations, town halls, health care clinics, hospitals, childcare centers, assisted living facilities, rehabilitation centers, public buildings, schools, libraries, and many other community-based initiatives. **Application Deadline: Open**

[Mutual Self-Help Housing Technical Assistance Grants](#)

U.S. Department of Agriculture

USDA Rural Development provides grants to organizations to help them carry out local self-help housing construction projects. Recipients supervise groups of very-low- and low-income individuals and families as they construct their own homes in rural areas. **Application deadline: Open**

[On-Farm Labor Housing Loans](#)

U.S. Department of Agriculture

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