

THE RURAL REPORT | JUN 23 2026

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

Senate Releases Farm Bill Text

Senate Agriculture Committee Chair John Boozman (R-AR) released long-awaited farm bill text today, signaling the Senate's intent to advance a comprehensive reauthorization before the August recess. The proposal largely mirrors House Republicans' farm bill, which passed in the House in April, including strengthened farm safety net provisions and conservation funding changes, while omitting several controversial House provisions related to state pesticide labeling laws, animal confinement standards, and Food for Peace. Notably, the draft does not delay implementation of state cost-sharing requirements for SNAP benefits, a key Democratic priority, setting up a potential partisan dispute that could complicate bipartisan passage. Boozman is targeting a committee markup following the July Fourth recess.

USDA Announces Rural Leadership Appointments

USDA announced several leadership appointments within the Department's Rural Development wing today. Former Deputy Under Secretary Neal Robbins will serve as Senior Advisor for Rural Engagement, while Joe Gilson, previously Rural Development Chief of Staff and a former government affairs director at the American Farm Bureau Federation, has been appointed Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development. Additional appointments include Monica Mason as Regional Operations Manager, Gimmie Jo Jansonius as Chief of Staff for the Rural Business-Cooperative Service, and Robert Hosford as Director of State Operations.

The appointments come on the heels of USDA's recent announcement of its intent to reorganize the Rural Development mission area to improve customer service, expand program accessibility, and modernize agency operations. As part of the restructuring, USDA Rural Development plans to consolidate loan origination, processing, and servicing functions under a centralized national framework while implementing updated IT systems. USDA states these changes are intended to improve efficiency, strengthen quality control, reduce delinquency rates, better safeguard taxpayer resources, and enhance the agency's responsiveness to rural communities and program participants nationwide. USDA is also hosting stakeholder listening sessions to provide additional details on the forthcoming changes and gather feedback from rural partners.

Funding Opportunities

[Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant Programs](#)

U.S. Department of Agriculture

USDA Rural Development provides funding for rural projects through local utility organizations. USDA provides zero-interest loans to local utilities which they, in turn, pass through to local businesses (ultimate recipients) for projects that will create and retain employment in rural areas. ***Application deadline: 6/30/2026***

[Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program](#)

U.S. Department of Agriculture

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to Microenterprise Development Organizations (MDOs) to provide training and technical assistance to microloan borrowers and micro entrepreneurs. ***Application deadline: 6/30/2026***

[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***