

### Subpart A—General

#### § 3550.1 Applicability.

This part sets forth policies for the direct single family housing loan programs operated by the Rural Housing Service (RHS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). It addresses the requirements of sections 502 and 504 of the Housing Act of 1949, as amended, and includes policies regarding both loan and grant origination and servicing. Procedures for implementing these regulations can be found in program handbooks, available in any Rural Development office. Any provision on the expenditure of funds under this part is contingent upon the availability of funds.

#### § 3550.2 Purpose.

The purpose of the direct RHS single family housing loan programs is to provide low- and very low-income people who will live in rural areas with an opportunity to own adequate but modest, decent, safe, and sanitary dwellings and related facilities. The section 502 program offers persons who do not currently own adequate housing, and who cannot obtain other credit, the opportunity to acquire, build, rehabilitate, improve, or relocate dwellings in rural areas. The section 504 program offers loans to very low-income homeowners who cannot obtain other credit to repair or rehabilitate their properties. The section 504 program also offers grants to homeowners age 62 or older who cannot obtain a loan to correct health and safety hazards or to make the unit accessible to household members with disabilities.

#### § 3550.3 Civil rights.

RHS will administer its programs fairly, and in accordance with both the letter and the spirit of all equal opportunity and fair housing legislation and applicable executive orders. Loans, grants, services, and benefits provided under this part shall not be denied to any person based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, marital status, familial status, age, physical or mental disability, receipt of income from public assistance, or because the applicant has, in good faith, exercised any right under the Consumer Credit

Protection Act (15 U.S.C. 1601 *et seq.*). All activities under this part shall be accomplished in accordance with the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 3601–3620), Executive Order 11246, and Executive Order 11063, as amended by Executive Order 12259, as applicable. The civil rights compliance requirements for RHS are in 7 CFR part 1901, subpart E.

#### § 3550.4 Reviews and appeals.

Whenever RHS makes a decision that is adverse to a participant, RHS will provide the participant with written notice of such adverse decision and the participant's rights to a USDA National Appeals Division hearing in accordance with 7 CFR part 11. Any adverse decision, whether appealable or non-appealable may be reviewed by the next-level RHS supervisor.

#### § 3550.5 Environmental requirements.

(a) *Policy.* RHS will consider environmental quality as equal with economic, social, and other relevant factors in program development and decision-making processes. RHS will take into account potential environmental impacts of proposed projects by working with RHS applicants, other federal agencies, Indian tribes, State and local governments, and interested citizens and organizations in order to formulate actions that advance the program's goals in a manner that will protect, enhance, and restore environmental quality.

(b) *Regulatory references.* Processing and servicing actions under this part will be done in accordance with the requirements provided in 7 CFR part 1940, subpart G which addresses environmental requirements and 7 CFR part 1924, subpart A, which addresses lead-based paint.

#### § 3550.6 State law or State supplement.

State and local laws and regulations, and the laws of federally recognized Indian tribes, may affect RHS implementation of certain provisions of this regulation, for example, with respect to the treatment of liens, construction, or environmental policies. Supplemental guidance may be issued in the case of any conflict or significant differences.