

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE****National Resources Conservation Service****Buena Vista Watershed, Rockbridge County and City of Buena Vista, Virginia**

**AGENCY:** U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Resources Conservation Service.

**ACTION:** Notice of Availability of Record of Decision.

**SUMMARY:** M. Denise Doetzer, Responsible Federal Official for projects administered under the provisions of Public Law 83-566, 16 U.S.C. 1001-1008, in the State of Virginia, is hereby providing notification that a record of decision to proceed with the installation of the Buena Vista Watershed project is available. Single copies of this record of decision may be obtained from M. Denise Doetzer at the address shown on the next page.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ms. M. Denise Doetzer, State Conservationist, USDA, National Resources Conservation Service, Culpeper Building, Suite 209, 1606 Santa Rosa Road, Richmond, Virginia 23229-5014, telephone (804) 287-1691.

This activity is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Under No. 10.904, Watershed and Flood Prevention, and is subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials.)

Dated: March 31, 1999.

**M. Denise Doetzer,**  
*State Conservationist.*

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BILLING CODE 3410-16-M

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE****Rural Business-Cooperative Service****Inviting Preapplications for Rural Cooperative Development Grants**

**AGENCY:** Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS) announces the availability of approximately \$1.75 million in competing Rural Cooperative Development Grant (RCDG) funds for fiscal year (FY) 1999. This action will comply with legislation which authorizes grants for establishing and operating centers for rural cooperative development. The intended effect of this notice is to solicit preapplications for FY 1999 and award grants before September 1, 1999.

**DATES:** The deadline for receipt of a preapplication is May 28, 1999. Preapplications received after that date will not be considered.

**ADDRESSES:** Entities wishing to apply for assistance should contact their USDA Rural Development State Office to receive further information and copies of the preapplication package.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** James E. Haskell, Assistant Deputy Administrator, Cooperative Services, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Stop 3250, Room 4016, South Agriculture Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20250-3250. Telephone (202) 720-8460.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Rural Cooperative Development Grants (RCDG) is authorized by section 310B(e) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1932(e) and regulations are contained in 7 CFR part 4284, subpart F. The primary objective of the RCDG program is to improve the economic condition of rural areas through cooperative development. The program is administered through USDA Rural Development State Offices acting on behalf of RBS.

Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis to nonprofit corporations and institutions of higher education based on specific selection criteria. The priorities described in this paragraph will be used by RBS to rate preapplications. RBS review of preapplications will include the complete preapplication package submitted to the Rural Development State office. Points will be distributed according to ranking as compared with other preapplications on hand. Points will be awarded to each factor on a 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 basis depending on the applicant's ranking compared to other applicants.

(A) Preference will be given to applications that:

(1) Demonstrate a proven track record in administering a nationally coordinated, regionally or State-wide operated project;

(2) Demonstrate previous expertise in providing technical assistance to cooperatives in rural areas;

(3) Demonstrate the ability to assist in the retention of business, facilitate the establishment of cooperatives and new cooperative approaches, and generate employment opportunities that will improve the economic conditions of rural areas;

(4) Demonstrate the ability to create horizontal linkages among cooperative businesses within and among various sectors in rural areas of the United

States and vertical linkages to domestic and international markets;

(5) Commit to providing technical assistance and other services to underserved and economically distressed rural areas of the United States;

(6) Commit to providing greater than a 25 percent matching contribution with private funds and in-kind contributions;

(7) Evidence transferability or demonstration value to assist rural areas outside of project area; and

(8) Demonstrate that any cooperative development activity is consistent with positive environmental stewardship.

**Fiscal Year 1999 Preapplication Submission**

Preapplications must include a clear statement of the goals and objectives of the project and a plan which describes the proposed project. Each preapplication received in the State office will be reviewed to determine if the preapplication is consistent with the eligible purposes outlined in 7 CFR part 4284, subpart F. Preapplications without supportive data to address selection criteria will not be considered. Copies of 7 CFR part 4284, subpart F, will be provided to any interested applicant by making a request to the Rural Development State office or RBS National office. Preapplications must be completed and submitted to the Rural Development State office as soon as possible, but no later than May 28, 1999. Preapplications received after May 28, 1999, will not be considered.

Each preapplication must contain the following:

(A) A detailed Table of Contents containing page numbers for each component of the preapplication.

(B) A project summary of 250 words or less on a separate page. This page must include the title of the project and the names of the primary project contacts and the applicant organization, followed by the summary. The summary should be self-contained and should describe the overall goals, relevance of the project, and a listing of all organizations involved in the project. The project summary should immediately follow the Table of Contents.

(C) A separate one-page information sheet which lists each of the eight evaluation criteria followed by the page numbers of all relevant material and documentation contained in the preapplication which supports that criteria. This page should immediately follow the project summary.

(D) An additional requirement for those applicants who have received funding under the RCDG program in