

(2) toilet centered a minimum of 18 inches from side wall with grab bars or blocking;

(3) minimum 30 × 48 inch area of approach in front of all fixtures;

(4) minimum 29 inch clearance below lavatory counter with insulated piping (a removable cabinet front may be used);

(5) minimum 32 inch clearance for all door openings;

(6) minimum 18 inch space at latch side of all doors;

(7) "view" windows at a maximum 36 inch sill height;

(8) electrical receptacles at 15 to 18 inches of height;

(9) flush thresholds (maximum of 1/2 inch rise);

(10) minimum 42 inch accessible route throughout;

(11) lights switches and thermostat at 48 inch maximum height;

(12) high contrast, glare free floor surfaces and trim;

(13) minimum of one entry ramped with accessible route to parking and mailbox, or property designed to accommodate such needs at a later time;

(14) kitchen cabinets with removable panel under sink, pipes insulated, and removable fronts for work space;

(15) lever handles for sink, lavatory, and door knobs; and

(16) if the house does not have an attached garage, a minimum 8 × 8 foot accessible, attached storage space.

#### F. Ownership Requirements

Section 3550.58 applies with the exception of paragraphs (b), (c), (d), and (e). At the time of closing, the applicant must have fee-simple ownership.

#### G. Escrow Account

Section 3550.60 applies. Escrow accounts are required regardless of the loan and grant amounts.

#### H. Insurance

Section 3550.61 applies; however, the loss payable clause must cover the combined amount of all loans needed to obtain the housing plus the section 502 grant. Flood insurance, where applicable, is required regardless of the loan or grant amount.

#### I. Appraisals

Section 3550.62 applies. Appraisals are required regardless of the loan and grant amounts. The combined section 502 loan and grant, plus any prior liens, may not exceed the appraised value.

#### J. Maximum Loan Amount

Section 3550.63 applies, with the exception of paragraph (b)(3). The Housing and Urban Development (HUD) 203(b) limits in effect as of September 30, 1998, apply.

#### K. Payment Subsidy

Section 3550.68 applies, with the exception of paragraph (c). Eligible applicants will receive interest credit.

#### L. Deferred Mortgage Payments

Section 3550.69 is not applicable.

#### M. Recapture

Section 3550.162 applies; however, the section 502 grant shall be considered original equity. If the loan is repaid within its 10th year anniversary, or a penalty is imposed for a default on the grant, the balance due on the 502 grant shall be considered to be part of the outstanding balance on the 502 loan for recapture purposes.

#### N. Other

Sections 3550.71, 3550.73, 3550.74, and 3550.101 through 3550.150 are not applicable.

### VI. Exception Authority

The Administrator, or Deputy Administrator, Single Family Housing, reserves the right to make an exception to any requirement or provision of this NOFA or address any omission that is consistent with the applicable statute upon the request of the State Director for North Carolina if he or she determines that application of the requirement or provision, or failure to take action in the case of an omission, would adversely affect the Government's financial interests.

Dated: December 15, 2000.

**James C. Kearney,**

*Administrator, Rural Housing Service.*

[FR Doc. 00-32620 Filed 12-22-00; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3410-XV-U**

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Rural Housing Service

#### Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the Section 515 Rural Rental Housing Program for Fiscal Year 2001

**AGENCY:** Rural Housing Service (RHS), USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** This NOFA announces the timeframe to submit applications for section 515 Rural Rental Housing (RRH) loan funds and section 521 Rental Assistance (RA) for new construction, including applications for the nonprofit set-aside for eligible nonprofit entities, the set-aside for the most Underserved Counties and Colonias (Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act), and the set-aside for Empowerment Zones and Enterprise

Communities (EZ/ECs) and Rural Economic Area Partnership (REAP) communities. This document describes the methodology that will be used to distribute funds, the application process, submission requirements, and areas of special emphasis or consideration.

**DATES:** The closing deadline for receipt of all applications, including those for the set-asides, in response to this NOFA is 5 p.m., local time for each Rural Development State office on March 26, 2001. The application closing deadline is firm as to date and hour. RHS will not consider any application that is received after the closing deadline. Applicants intending to mail applications must provide sufficient time to permit delivery on or before the closing deadline date and time. Acceptance by a post office or private mailer does not constitute delivery. Facsimile (FAX) and postage due applications will not be accepted.

**ADDRESSES:** Applicants wishing to apply for assistance must contact the Rural Development State office serving the place in which they desire to submit an application for rural rental housing to receive further information and copies of the application package. Rural Development will date and time stamp incoming applications to evidence timely receipt, and, upon request, will provide the applicant with a written acknowledgment of receipt. A listing of Rural Development State offices, their addresses, telephone numbers, and person to contact follows:

**Note:** Telephone numbers listed are not toll-free.

Alabama State Office, Suite 601, Sterling Centre, 4121 Carmichael Road, Montgomery, AL 36106-3683, (334) 279-3455, TDD (334) 279-3495, James B. Harris

Alaska State Office, 800 West Evergreen, Suite 201, Palmer, AK 99645, (907) 761-7734, TDD (907) 761-8905, Miguel Correa

Arizona State Office, Phoenix Corporate Center, 3003 N. Central Ave., Suite 900, Phoenix, AZ 85012-2906, (602) 280-8765, TDD (602) 280-8706, Johnna Vargas

Arkansas State Office, 700 W. Capitol Ave., Rm. 3416, Little Rock, AR 72201-3225, (501) 301-3250, TDD (501) 301-3279, Cathy Jones

California State Office, 430 G Street, Agency 4169, Davis, CA 95616-4169, (530) 792-5819 or, (530) 792-5830, TDD (530) 792-5848, Millie Manzanedo or, Jeff Deiss

Colorado State Office, 655 Parfet Street, Room E100, Lakewood, CO 80215,

- (303) 236-2801 (ext. 122), TDD (303) 236-1590, "Sam" Mitchell
- Connecticut—Served by Massachusetts State Office
- Delaware and Maryland State Office, 5201 South Dupont Highway, PO Box 400, Camden, DE 19934-9998, (302) 697-4353, TDD (302) 697-4303, Pat Baker
- Florida & Virgin Islands State Office, 4440 N.W. 25th Place, Gainesville, FL 32614-7010, (352) 338-3465, TDD (352) 338-3499, Joseph P. Fritz
- Georgia State Office, Stephens Federal Building, 355 E. Hancock Avenue, Athens, GA 30601-2768, (706) 546-2164, TDD (706) 546-2034, Wayne Rogers
- Guam—Served by Hawaii State Office
- Hawaii, Guam, & Western Pacific Territories State Office, Room 311, Federal Building, 154 Waiuanue Avenue, Hilo, HI 96720, (808) 933-8316, TDD (808) 933-8321, Abraham Kubo
- Idaho State Office, Suite A1, 9173 West Barnes Dr., Boise, ID 83709, (208) 378-5630, TDD (208) 378-5644, LaDonn McElligott
- Illinois State Office, Illini Plaza, Suite 103, 1817 South Neil Street, Champaign, IL 61820, (217) 398-5412 (ext. 256), TDD (217) 398-5396, Barry L. Ramsey
- Indiana State Office, 5975 Lakeside Boulevard, Indianapolis, IN 46278, (317) 290-3100 (ext. 423), TDD (317) 290-3343, John Young
- Iowa State Office, 873 Federal Building, 210 Walnut Street, Des Moines, IA 50309, (515) 284-4493, TDD (515) 284-4858, Bruce McGuire
- Kansas State Office, 1200 SW Executive Drive, PO Box 4653, Topeka, KS 66604, (785) 271-2718, TDD (785) 271-2767, Gary Schumaker
- Kentucky State Office, 771 Corporate Drive, Suite 200, Lexington, KY 40503, (859) 224-7325, TDD (859) 224-7422, Paul Higgins
- Louisiana State Office, 3727 Government Street, Alexandria, LA 71302, (318) 473-7962, TDD (318) 473-7655, Yvonne R. Emerson
- Maine State Office, 967 Illinois Ave., Suite 4, PO Box 405, Bangor, ME 04402-0405, (207) 990-9110, TDD (207) 942-7331, Dale D. Holmes
- Maryland—Served by Delaware State Office
- Massachusetts, Connecticut, & Rhode Island State Office, 451 West Street, Amherst, MA 01002, (413) 253-4333, TDD (413) 253-7068, Donald Colburn
- Michigan State Office, 3001 Coolidge Road, Suite 200, East Lansing, MI 48823, (517) 324-5192, TDD (517) 337-6795, Philip Wolak
- Minnesota State Office, 410 AgriBank Building, 375 Jackson Street, St. Paul, MN 55101-1853, (651) 602-7820, TDD (651) 602-3799, Jackie Goodnough
- Mississippi State Office, Federal Building, Suite 831, 100 W. Capitol Street, Jackson, MS 39269, (601) 965-4325, TDD (601) 965-5850, Darnella Smith-Murray
- Missouri State Office, 601 Business Loop 70 West, Parkade Center, Suite 235, Columbia, MO 65203, (573) 876-0990, TDD (573) 876-9301, Gary Frisch
- Montana State Office, Unit 1, Suite B, 900 Technology Blvd., Bozeman, MT 59715, (406) 585-2515, TDD (406) 585-2562, Craig Hildreth
- Nebraska State Office, Federal Building, room 152, 100 Centennial Mall N, Lincoln, NE 68508, (402) 437-5567, TDD (402) 437-5093, Byron Fischer
- Nevada State Office, 1390 South Curry Street, Carson City, NV 89703-9910, (775) 887-1222 (ext. 13), TDD (775) 885-0633, William L. Brewer
- New Hampshire State Office, Concord Center, Suite 218, Box 317, 10 Ferry Street, Concord, NH 03301-5004, (603) 223-6046, TDD (603) 229-0536, Jim Fowler
- New Jersey State Office, Tarnsfield Plaza, Suite 22, 790 Woodland Road, Mt. Holly, NJ 08060, (609) 265-3631, TDD (609) 265-3687, George Hyatt, Jr.
- New Mexico State Office, 6200 Jefferson St., NE, Room 255, Albuquerque, NM 87109, (505) 761-4944, TDD (505) 761-4938, Carmen N. Lopez
- New York State Office, The Galleries of Syracuse, 441 S. Salina Street, Suite 357, Syracuse, NY 13202, (315) 477-6419, TDD (315) 477-6447, George N. Von Pless
- North Carolina State Office, 4405 Bland Road, Suite 260, Raleigh, NC 27609, (919) 873-2062, TDD (919) 873-2003, Eileen Nowlin
- North Dakota State Office, Federal Building, Room 208, 220 East Rosser, PO Box 1737, Bismarck, ND 58502, (701) 530-2049, TDD (701) 530-2113, Kathy Lake
- Ohio State Office, Federal Building, Room 507, 200 North High Street, Columbus, OH 43215-2477, (614) 469-5165, TDD (614) 469-5757, Gerald Arnott
- Oklahoma State Office, 100 USDA, Suite 108, Stillwater, OK 74074-2654, (405) 742-1070, TDD (405) 742-1007, Phil Reimers
- Oregon State Office, 101 SW Main, Suite 1410, Portland, OR 97204-3222, (503) 414-3325, TDD (503) 414-3387, Joyce Hein
- Pennsylvania State Office, One Credit Union Place, Suite 330, Harrisburg, PA 17110-2996, (717) 237-2281, TDD (717) 237-2261, Gary Rothrock
- Puerto Rico State Office, New San Juan Office Bldg., Room 501, 159 Carlos E. Chardon Street, Hato Rey, PR 00918-5481, (787) 766-5095 (ext. 254), TDD 1-800-274-1572, Lourdes Colon
- Rhode Island—Served by Massachusetts State Office
- South Carolina State Office, Strom Thurmond Federal Building, 1835 Assembly Street, Room 1007, Columbia, SC 29201, (803) 253-3432, TDD (803) 765-5697, Larry D. Floyd
- South Dakota State Office, Federal Building, Room 210, 200 Fourth Street, SW, Huron, SD 57350, (605) 352-1132, TDD (605) 352-1147, Dwight Wullweber
- Tennessee State Office, Suite 300, 3322 West End Avenue, Nashville, TN 37203-1084, (615) 783-1300, TDD (615) 783-1397, G. Benson Lasater
- Texas State Office, Federal Building, Suite 102, 101 South Main, Temple, TX 76501, (254) 742-9755, TDD (254) 742-9712, Eugene G. Pavlat
- Utah State Office, Wallace F. Bennett Federal Building, 125 S. State Street, Room 4311, Salt Lake City, UT 84147-0350, (801) 524-4324, TDD (801) 524-3309, Robert L. Milianta
- Vermont State Office, City Center, 3rd Floor, 89 Main Street, Montpelier, VT 05602, (802) 828-6028, TDD (802) 223-6365, Sandra Mercier
- Virgin Islands—Served by Florida State Office
- Virginia State Office, Culpeper Building, Suite 238, 1606 Santa Rosa Road, Richmond, VA 23229, (804) 287-1582, TDD (804) 287-1753, Carlton Jarratt
- Washington State Office, Suite B, 1835 Black Lake Boulevard, SW, Olympia, WA 98512-5715, (360) 704-7707, TDD (360) 704-7760, Deborah Davis
- Western Pacific Territories—Served by Hawaii State Office
- West Virginia State Office, Federal Building, 75 High Street, Room 320, Morgantown, WV 26505-7500, (304) 291-4793, TDD (304) 284-5941, Sue Snodgrass
- Wisconsin State Office, 4949 Kirschling Court, Stevens Point, WI 54481, (715) 345-7620 (ext. 7145), TDD (715) 345-7614, Sherry Engel
- Wyoming State Office, 100 East B, Federal Building, Room 1005, PO Box 820, Casper, WY 82602, (307) 261-6315, TDD (307) 261-6333, Charles Huff

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

For general information, applicants may contact Linda Armour, Senior Loan Officer, Multi-Family Housing Processing Division, Rural Housing Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Stop 0781, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC, 20250, telephone (202) 720-1753 (voice) (this is not a toll free number) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD-Federal Information Relay Service).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Programs Affected**

The Rural Rental Housing program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under Number 10.415, Rural Rental Housing Loans. Rental Assistance is listed in the Catalog under Number 10.427, Rural Rental Assistance Payments.

**Explanation of 90-Day NOFA Application Deadline**

The Agency is using a 90-day application period to allow adequate time for our customers to complete their applications, including finding a suitable site and preparing the market study. In many cases, the process of locating a site suitable for multi-family housing is time-consuming. Factors such as environmental issues, zoning issues, and community support must be addressed. In addition, the market study required by RHS is complex. It is difficult to complete a high quality market study within a limited timeframe. Because the quality of the site and market are two of the most important ingredients for the long-term success of a multi-family development, a 90-day application period is provided.

**Discussion of Notice**

**I. Authority and Distribution Methodology**

*A. Authority*

Section 515 of the Housing Act of 1949 (42 U.S.C. 1485) provides RHS with the authority to make loans to any individual, corporation, association, trust, Indian tribe, public or private nonprofit organization, consumer cooperative, or partnership to provide rental or cooperative housing and related facilities in rural areas for very-low, low, or moderate income persons or families, including elderly persons and persons with disabilities. Rental assistance (RA) is a tenant subsidy for very-low and low-income families residing in rural rental housing facilities with RHS financing and may be requested with applications for such facilities.

*B. Distribution Methodology*

The total amount available for FY 2001 for section 515 is \$114,321,087, of which \$49,000,000 is available for new construction as follows:

- Section 515 new construction funds: \$16,980,753
- Set-aside for nonprofits: \$10,288,998
- Set-aside for Underserved Counties and Colonias: \$5,716,054
- Set-aside for EZ, EC, and REAP zones: \$14,514,195
- State Rental Assistance (RA) designated reserve: \$1,500,000

*C. Section 515 New Construction Funds*

For fiscal year 2001, the Administrator has determined that it would not be practical to allocate funds to States because of funding limitations; therefore, section 515 new construction funds will be distributed to States based on a National competition, as follows:

1. States will accept, review, score, and rank requests in accordance with 7 CFR part 1944, subpart E. The scoring factors are:

(a) The presence and extent of leveraged assistance for the units that will serve RHS income-eligible tenants at basic rents comparable to those if RHS provided full financing, computed as a percentage of the RHS total development cost (TDC). RHS TDC excludes non-RHS eligible costs such as a developer's fee. The required applicant contribution is not considered leveraged assistance. Leveraged assistance includes loans and grants from other sources, contributions from the applicant above the required contribution indicated by the Sources and Uses Comprehensive Evaluation (available from the Rural Development State Office) and tax abatements or other savings in operating costs provided that, at the end of the abatement period when the benefit is no longer available, the basic rents are comparable to or lower than the basic rents if RHS provided full financing. Loan proposals that include secondary funds from other sources that have been requested but have not yet been committed will be processed as follows: The proposal will be scored based on the requested funds, provided (1) the applicant includes evidence of a filed application for the funds; and (2) the funding date of the requested funds will permit processing of the loan request in the current funding cycle, or, if the applicant does not receive the requested funds, will permit processing of the next highest ranked proposal in the current year. Points will be awarded in accordance with the following table. (0 to 20 points)

Percentage of leveraging	Points
75 or more .....	20
70-74 .....	19
65-69 .....	18
60-64 .....	17
55-59 .....	16
50-54 .....	15
45-49 .....	14
40-44 .....	13
35-39 .....	12
30-34 .....	11
25-29 .....	10
20-24 .....	9
15-19 .....	8
10-14 .....	7
5-9 .....	6
0-4 .....	0

(b) The units to be developed are in a colonia, tribal land, EZ, EC, or REAP community, or in a place identified in the State Consolidated Plan or State Needs Assessment as a high need community for multifamily housing. (20 points)

(c) In states where RHS has an ongoing formal working relationship, agreement, or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the State to provide State resources (State funds, State RA, HOME funds, CDBG funds, or Low-Income Housing Tax Credits) for RHS proposals; or where the State provides preference or points to RHS proposals in awarding such State resources, 20 points will be provided to loan requests that include such State resources in an amount equal to at least 5 percent of the total development cost. (National office initiative)

(d) The loan request includes donated land meeting the provisions of 7 CFR 1944.215(r)(4). (5 points)

2. The National office will rank all requests nationwide and distribute funds to States in rank order, within funding and RA limits. If insufficient funds or RA remain for the next ranked proposal, the Agency will select the next ranked proposal that falls within the remaining levels.

*D. Applications That Do Not Require New Construction Rental Assistance (RA)*

For fiscal year 2001, limited new construction RA is available. Therefore, the Agency is inviting applications to develop units in markets that do not require RA. The market study for non-RA proposals must clearly demonstrate a need and demand for the units by prospective tenants at income levels that can support the proposed rents without tenant subsidies. The proposed units must offer amenities that are typical for the market area at rents that are comparable to conventional rents in the market for similar units.

### E. Set-Asides

Loan requests will be accepted for the following set-asides:

#### 1. Nonprofit Set-Aside

An amount of \$10,288,998 has been set aside for nonprofit applicants. All loan proposals must be in designated places in accordance with 7 CFR part 1944, subpart E. A State or jurisdiction may receive one proposal from this set-aside, which cannot exceed \$1 million. A State could get additional funds from this set-aside if any funds remain after funding one proposal from each participating State. If there are insufficient funds to fund one loan request from each participating State, selection will be made by point score. If there are any funds remaining, they will revert to the National office reserve. Funds from this set-aside will be available only to nonprofit entities, which may include a partnership that has as its general partner a nonprofit entity or the nonprofit entity's for-profit subsidiary which will be receiving low-income housing tax credits authorized under section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. To be eligible for this set-aside, the nonprofit entity must be an organization that:

(a) Will own an interest in the project to be financed and will materially participate in the development and the operations of the project;

(b) Is a private organization that has nonprofit, tax exempt status under section 501(c)(3) or section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;

(c) Has among its purposes the planning, development, or management of low-income housing or community development projects; and

(d) Is not affiliated with or controlled by a for-profit organization.

#### 2. Underserved Counties and Colonias Set-Aside

An amount of \$5,716,054 has been set aside for loan requests to develop units in the 100 most needy underserved counties or colonias as defined in section 509(f) of the Housing Act of 1949.

#### 3. EZ, EC, and REAP Set-Aside

An amount of \$14,514,195 has been set aside to develop units in EZ, EC, or REAP communities. Loan requests that are eligible for this set-aside may also be eligible for regular section 515 funds as a high-need community. The state must indicate on the list submitted to the National office if the request is eligible for the EZ, EC, and REAP set-aside and regular section 515 funds. If requests for this set-aside exceed available funds, selection will be made by point score.

### II. Funding Limits

A. Individual loan requests may not exceed \$1 million. This applies to regular section 515 funds and set-aside funds. The Administrator may make an exception to this limit in cases where a State's average total development costs exceed the National average by 50 percent or more.

B. No State may receive more than \$2.5 million from regular section 515 funds. Reserve funds, including set-aside funds, are not included in this cap.

### III. Rental Assistance (RA)

New construction RA will be held in the National office for use with section 515 Rural Rental Housing loans. RA may be requested by applicants, except for non-RA requests in accordance with section I.D. above.

### IV. Application Process

All applications for section 515 new construction funds must be filed with the appropriate Rural Development State office and must meet the requirements of 7 CFR part 1944, subpart E and section V of this NOFA. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed and will be returned to the applicant. No application will be accepted after 5:00 p.m., local time, on the application deadline previously mentioned unless that date and time is extended by a Notice published in the **Federal Register**.

### V. Application Submission Requirements

A. Each application shall include all of the information, materials, forms and exhibits required by 7 CFR part 1944, subpart E as well as comply with the provisions of this NOFA. Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to include a checklist and to have their applications indexed and tabbed to facilitate the review process. The Rural Development State office will base its determination of completeness of the application and the eligibility of each applicant on the information provided in the application.

B. Applicants are advised to contact the Rural Development State office serving the place in which they desire to submit an application for the following:

1. Application information;
2. Any restrictions on funding availability (applications that exceed the National limit of \$1 million will be returned to the applicant); and
3. List of designated places for which applications for new section 515 facilities may be submitted.

### VI. Areas of Special Emphasis or Consideration

A. The selection criteria contained in 7 CFR part 1944, subpart E includes two optional criteria, one set by the National office and one by the State office. This fiscal year, the National office initiative will be used in the selection criteria as follows: In states where RHS has an ongoing formal working relationship, agreement, or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the State to provide State resources (State funds, State RA, HOME funds, CDBG funds, or LIHTC) for RHS proposals; or where the State provides preference or points to RHS proposals in awarding these State Resources, 20 points will be provided to loan requests that include such State resources in an amount equal to at least 5 percent of the total development cost. No State selection criteria will be used this fiscal year.

B. \$10,288,998 is available nationwide in a set-aside for eligible nonprofit organizations as defined in 42 U.S.C. 1485(w).

C. \$5,716,054 is available nationwide in a set-aside for the 100 most Underserved Counties and Colonias.

D. \$14,514,195 is available nationwide in a set-aside for EZ, EC, and REAP communities.

E. \$1,500,000 is available nationwide in a reserve for States with viable State Rental Assistance (RA) programs. In order to participate, States are to submit specific written information about the State RA program, i.e., a memorandum of understanding, documentation from the provider, etc., to the National Office.

Dated: December 15, 2000.

**James C. Kearney,**

*Administrator, Rural Housing Service.*

[FR Doc. 00-32621 Filed 12-22-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-XV-U

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Rural Housing Service

#### Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) for Section 514 Farm Labor Housing Loans and Section 516 Farm Labor Housing Grants for Off-Farm Housing for Fiscal Year 2001

**AGENCY:** Rural Housing Service (RHS), USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** This NOFA announces the timeframe to submit applications for section 514 Farm Labor Housing loan funds and section 516 Farm Labor Housing grant funds for new construction and acquisition with rehabilitation of off-farm units for