

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement****Notice of Request for Approval of an Information Collection; National Scholars Program; Withdrawal**

AGENCY: Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement (OPPE), USDA.

ACTION: Notice; withdrawal.

SUMMARY: OPPE is withdrawing a Notice of the USDA/1890 National Scholars Program published in the **Federal Register** on January 3, 2022.

DATES: This withdrawal is effective January 10, 2022.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Kenya Nicholas, Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement, USDA/1890 National Scholars Program, 1400 Independence Avenue, Washington, DC 20250-3700; or call (202) 720-6350 or send a fax to: (202) 720-7704. You may also send an email to: 1890init@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In the **Federal Register** of January 3, 2022, withdraw FR Doc 2021-28389. We will submit an updated Notice regarding the USDA/1890 National Scholars Program at a later date.

Authority: 87 FR 68.

Dated: January 10, 2022.

Kenya Nicholas,

Deputy Director, Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement.

[FR Doc. 2022-00634 Filed 1-13-22; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3412-88-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**Rural Business-Cooperative Service**

[Docket Number: RBS-21-BUSINESS-0031]

Notice of Solicitation of Applications for the Rural Business Development Grant Program To Provide Technical Assistance for Rural Transportation Systems

AGENCY: Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice is to invite applications for grants to provide Technical Assistance for passenger Rural Transportation (RT) systems under the Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) program and the terms for such funding. Grant funds will provide Technical Assistance for RT systems including designated funds to provide Technical Assistance to RT systems operating within tribal lands of

Federally Recognized Native American Tribes (FRNAT) (collectively “Programs”). This notice is being issued in order to allow applicants sufficient time to leverage financing, prepare and submit their applications and give the Agency time to process applications within fiscal year (FY) 2022. Successful applications will be selected by the Agency for funding and subsequently awarded to the extent that funding may ultimately be made available through appropriations. An announcement on the website at: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/newsroom/notices-solicitation-applications-nosas> will identify the amount received in the appropriations. All applicants are responsible for any expenses incurred in developing their applications.

DATES: The deadline for completed applications to be received in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development State Office is no later than 4:30 p.m. (local time) on April 14, 2022, to be eligible for FY 2022 grant funding. Applications received after the deadline will be ineligible for funding.

ADDRESSES: This funding announcement will also be announced on www.Grants.gov. Applications must be submitted to the USDA Rural Development State Office where the Project is located. A list of the USDA Rural Development State Office contacts can be found at: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Cindy Mason, Business Loan and Grant Analyst, Specialty Programs Division at (202) 690-1433 or cindy.mason@usda.gov, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-3226. For further information in this notice, please contact the Rural Development office for the State in which the applicant is located. A list of Rural Development State Office contacts is provided at the following link: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Priority Language for Funding Opportunities**

The Agency encourages applicants to consider projects that will advance the following key priorities (more details available at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/priority-points>):

- Assisting Rural communities recover economically from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly disadvantaged communities;

- Ensuring all rural residents have equitable access to RD programs and benefits from RD funded projects; and
- Reducing climate pollution and increasing resilience to the impacts of climate change through economic support to rural communities.

Overview

Solicitation Opportunity Title: Rural Business Development Grants.

Announcement Type: Initial Announcement.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 10.351.

Dates: The deadline for completed applications must be received in the USDA Rural Development State Office no later than 4:30 p.m. (local time) on April 14, 2022, to be eligible for FY 2022 grant funding.

A. Program Description

1. *Purpose of the Program.* The purpose of this program is to improve the economic conditions of Rural Areas by providing technical assistance that will enhance the operation of rural transportation systems.

2. *Statutory Authority.* This program is authorized under section 310B(c) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1932(c)). Regulations are contained in 7 CFR part 4280, subpart E. The program is administered on behalf of Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBCS) at the State level by the USDA Rural Development State Offices. Assistance provided to Rural Areas under the program has historically included the provision of on-site Technical Assistance to tribal, local and regional governments, public transit agencies, and related nonprofit and for-profit organizations in Rural Areas; the development of training materials; and the provision of necessary training assistance to local officials and agencies in Rural Areas.

Awards under the RBDG passenger transportation program will be made on a competitive basis using specific selection criteria contained in 7 CFR part 4280, subpart E, and in accordance with section 310B(c) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1932(c)). Information required to be in the application package includes Standard Form (SF) 424, “Application for Federal Assistance;” environmental documentation in accordance with 7 CFR part 1970, “Environmental Policies and Procedures;” Scope of Work Narrative; Income Statement; Balance Sheet or Audit for previous 3 years; SF LLL, “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities;” RD 400-1, “Equal Opportunity Agreement;” RD 400-4,

“Assurance Agreement;” and a letter providing Board authorization to obtain assistance. For the FRNAT grant, which must benefit FRNATs, at least 75 percent of the benefits of the Project must be received by members of FRNATs. The Project that scores the greatest number of points based on the RBDG selection criteria and the discretionary points will be selected for each grant.

For the funding for Technical Assistance for RT systems, applicants must be qualified national organizations with experience in providing Technical Assistance and training to rural communities nationwide for the purpose of improving passenger transportation services or facilities. To be considered “national,” RBCS requires a qualified organization to provide evidence that it can operate RT assistance programming nation-wide. An entity can qualify if they can work in partnership with other entities to fulfill the national requirement as long as the applicant will have ultimate control of the grant administration. For the funding for RT systems to FRNATs, an entity can qualify if they can work in partnership with other entities to support all federally recognized tribes in all States, as long as the applicant will have ultimate control of the grant administration. There is not a requirement to use the grant funds in a multi-State area. Grants will be made to qualified national organizations for the provision of Technical Assistance and training to Rural communities for the purpose of improving passenger transportation services or facilities.

3. *Definition of Terms.* The definitions applicable to this notice are published at 7 CFR 4280.403.

4. *Application Awards.* The Agency will review, evaluate, and score applications received in response to this notice based on the provisions in 7 CFR 4280, subpart E and as indicated in this notice. However, the Agency advises all interested parties that the applicant bears the burden in preparing and submitting a complete application in response to this notice.

B. Federal Award Information

Type of Award: Grants.

Fiscal Year Funds: FY 2022 (amount to be determined).

Available Funds: Anyone interested in submitting an application for funding under this program is encouraged to consult the Rural Development Web Newsroom website at: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/newsroom/notices-solicitation-applications-nosas>.

Approximate Number of Awards: To be determined based on the number of qualified applications received.

Maximum Awards: The Agency anticipates funding of \$500,000 for RT systems and \$250,000 for FRNAT RT projects. The amounts will be determined by the specific funding provided for the program in the FY 2022 Appropriations Act. The Agency will publish any maximum award amount on its website at: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/newsroom/notices-solicitation-applications-nosas>.

Award Date: Prior to September 30, 2022.

Performance Period: October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023.

Renewal or Supplemental Awards: None.

C. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants.

To be considered eligible, an entity must be a qualified national organization serving Rural Areas as evidenced in its organizational documents and demonstrated experience, per 7 CFR part 4280, subpart E. Grants will be competitively awarded to qualified national organizations.

The Agency requires the following information to make an eligibility determination that an applicant is a national organization. These applications must include, but are not limited to, the following:

(a) An original and one copy of SF 424, “Application for Federal Assistance (for non-construction);”

(b) Copies of applicant’s organizational documents showing the applicant’s legal existence and authority to perform the activities under the grant;

(c) A proposed scope of work, including a description of the proposed Project, details of the proposed activities to be accomplished and timeframes for completion of each task, the number of months for the duration of the Project, and the estimated time it will take from grant approval to the beginning of Project implementation;

(d) A written narrative that includes, at a minimum, the following items:

(1) An explanation of why the Project is needed, the benefits of the proposed Project, and how the Project meets the grant eligible purposes;

(2) Area to be served, identifying each governmental unit, *i.e.*, tribe, town, county, etc., to be affected by the Project;

(3) Description of how the Project will coordinate Economic Development activities with other Economic Development activities within the Project area;

(4) Businesses to be assisted, if appropriate, and economic development to be accomplished;

(5) An explanation of how the proposed Project will result in newly created, increased, or supported jobs in the area and the number of projected new and supported jobs within the next 3 years;

(6) A description of the applicant’s demonstrated capability and experience in providing the proposed Project assistance, including experience of key staff members and persons who will be providing the proposed Project activities and managing the Project;

(7) The method and rationale used to select the areas and businesses that will receive the service;

(8) A brief description of how the work will be performed, including whether organizational staff or consultants or contractors will be used; and

(9) Other information the Agency may request to assist it in making a grant award determination.

(e) The latest 3 years of financial information to show the applicant’s financial capacity to carry out the proposed work. If the applicant is less than 3 years old, at a minimum, the information should include all balance sheet(s), income statement(s), and cash flow statement(s). A current audited report is required if available;

(f) Documentation regarding the availability and amount of other funds to be used in conjunction with the funds from RBDG;

(g) A budget which includes salaries, fringe benefits, consultant costs, indirect costs, and other appropriate direct costs for the Project.

2. *Cost Sharing or Matching.* Matching funds are not required.

3. Other.

Applications will only be accepted from qualified national organizations to provide Technical Assistance for RT. There are no “responsiveness” or “threshold” eligibility criteria for these grants. There is no limit on the number of applications an applicant may submit under this announcement. None of the funds made available may be used to enter into a contract, memorandum of understanding, or cooperative agreement with, make a grant to, or provide a loan or loan guarantee to, any corporation that has any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, where the awarding agency is aware of the unpaid

tax liability, unless a Federal agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and has made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

None of the funds made available may be used to enter into a contract, memorandum of understanding, or cooperative agreement with, make a grant to, or provide a loan or loan guarantee to, any corporation that was convicted of a felony criminal violation under any Federal law within the preceding 24 months, where the awarding agency is aware of the conviction, unless a Federal agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and has made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

4. *Completeness Eligibility.*

Applications will not be considered for funding if they do not provide sufficient information to determine eligibility or are missing required elements.

D. Application and Submission Information

1. *Address to Request Application Package.*

For further information, entities wishing to apply for assistance should contact the USDA Rural Development State Office provided in the **ADDRESSES** section of this notice to obtain copies of the application package.

Prior to official submission of grant applications, applicants may request technical assistance or other application guidance from the Agency, as long as such requests are made prior to March 7, 2022. Technical Assistance is not meant to be an analysis or assessment of the quality of the materials submitted, a substitute for Agency review of completed applications, nor a determination of eligibility, if such determination requires in-depth analysis. The Agency will not solicit or consider scoring or eligibility information that is submitted after the application deadline. The Agency reserves the right to contact applicants to seek clarification information on materials contained in the submitted application.

Applications must be submitted in paper format or electronic submission. If you want to submit an electronic application, follow the instructions for the RBDG funding announcement located at: <http://www.grants.gov>. Please review the *Grants.gov* website for instructions on the process of registering your organization as soon as possible to ensure you can meet the electronic

application deadline. Applications submitted to a USDA Rural Development State Office must be received by the closing date and local time.

2. *Content and Form of Application Submission.*

You may submit your application in paper form or electronically through *Grants.gov*. Your application must contain all required information using only one of the submission methods. If you submit in paper form, any forms requiring signatures must include an original signature.

To apply electronically, you must follow the instructions for this funding announcement at: <http://www.grants.gov>. Please note that we cannot accept emailed or faxed applications.

You can locate the *Grants.gov* downloadable application package for this program by using a keyword, the program name, or the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number for this program.

When you enter the *Grants.gov* website, you will find information about applying electronically through the site, as well as the hours of operation.

To use *Grants.gov*, you must already have a Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and you must also be registered and maintain registration in the System Awards Management (SAM). We strongly recommend that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through *Grants.gov*.

Documents submitted electronically through *Grants.gov* must include electronic signatures. Original signatures may be required if funds are awarded.

After applying electronically through *Grants.gov*, you will receive an automatic acknowledgement from *Grants.gov* that contains a *Grants.gov* tracking number.

If you want to submit a paper application, send it to the State Office located in the State where the Project will primarily take place. You can find State Office contact information at: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>.

The organization submitting the application will be considered the lead entity. The program manager must be associated with the lead entity submitting the application.

An application must contain all of the required elements. Each application received in a USDA Rural Development State Office will be reviewed to determine if it is consistent with the eligible purposes contained in section

310B(c) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1932(c)). Each selection scoring criterion outlined in 7 CFR 4280.435 must be addressed in the application. Failure to address any of the criteria will result in a zero-point score for that criterion and will impact the overall evaluation of the application. Copies of 7 CFR part 4280, subpart E, are available on the Rural Development website at: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/page/regulations-and-guidance>, or will be provided to any interested applicant making a request to a USDA Rural Development State Office.

All Projects to receive Technical Assistance through these passenger transportation grant funds are to be identified when the applications are submitted to the USDA Rural Development State Office. Multiple Project applications must identify each individual Project, indicate the amount of funding requested for each individual Project, and address the criteria as stated above for each individual Project.

For multiple-Project applications, the average of the individual Project scores will be the score for that application.

The applicant documentation and forms needed for a complete application are located in the Program Description section of this notice, and 7 CFR part 4280, subpart E.

(a) There are no specific formats, specific limitations on number of pages, font size and type face, margins, paper size, number of copies, sequence or assembly requirements.

(b) The component pieces of this application should contain original signatures on the original application.

(c) Since these grants are for Technical Assistance for transportation purposes, no additional information requirements other than those described in this notice and 7 CFR part 4280, subpart E are required.

3. *Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management.*

All applicants must have a DUNS number which can be obtained at no cost via a toll-free request line at (866) 705-5711 or at: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is excepted from the requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c) or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to: (i) Be registered in SAMS before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan

under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. The Federal awarding agency may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Federal awarding agency is ready to make a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

4. Submission Dates and Times.

(a) *Application Deadline Date:* Paper applications are due no later than 4:30 p.m. (local time) on April 14, 2022. *Electronic applications must be submitted via grants.gov no later than 11:59 p.m. eastern time on April 14, 2022.*

Explanation of Deadlines:

Applications must be in the USDA Rural Development State Office or submitted in *grants.gov* by the deadline date and times as indicated above. If the due date falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or Federal holiday, the application is due the next business day.

(b) The deadline date means that the completed application package must be received in the USDA Rural Development State Office or in the *grants.gov* system by the deadline date established above. All application documents identified in this notice and in 7 CFR part 4280, subpart E, are required to be considered a complete application.

(c) If complete applications are not received by the deadline established above, the application will neither be reviewed nor considered under any circumstances.

(d) The Agency will determine the paper application receipt date based on the actual date postmarked.

(e) This notice is for RT Technical Assistance grants only and therefore, intergovernmental reviews are not required.

(f) These grants are for RT Technical Assistance grants only and no construction or equipment purchases are permitted. If the grantee has a previously approved indirect cost rate, it is permissible, otherwise, the applicant may elect to charge the 10 percent indirect cost permitted under 2 CFR 200.414(f) or request a determination of its Indirect Cost Rate. Due to the time required to evaluate Indirect Cost Rates, it is likely that all funds will be awarded by the time the Indirect Cost Rate is determined. No foreign travel is permitted. Pre-Federal

award costs will only be permitted with prior written approval by the Agency.

(g) Applicants must submit applications in paper copy format or an electronic submission as previously indicated in the Application and Submission Information section of this notice. If the applicant wishes to hand deliver its application, the addresses for these deliveries can be located in the **ADDRESSES** section of this notice.

(h) If you require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) please contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

E. Application Review Information

1. Criteria.

All eligible and complete applications will be evaluated and scored based on the scoring criteria contained in 7 CFR 4280.435. The Agency will select grantees subject to the grantees' satisfactory submission of the additional items required by 7 CFR part 4280, Section 4280.427, and the USDA Rural Development Letter of Conditions. Failure to address any one of the criteria in 7 CFR 4280.427 by the application deadline will result in the application being determined ineligible, and the application will not be considered for funding. The amount of an RT grant may be adjusted, at the Agency's discretion, to enable the Agency to award RT grants to the applications with the highest priority scores in each category.

2. Review and Selection Process.

Rural Development State Offices will review applications to determine if they are eligible for assistance based on the application and project eligibility requirements contained in 7 CFR 4280.416 and 4280.417, respectively, and as stated in this notice. If determined eligible, your application will be submitted to the National Office. Funding of the projects is subject to the applicant's satisfactory submission of the additional items required by that subpart and the USDA Rural Development Letter of Conditions. The Agency reserves the right to award additional discretionary points under 7 CFR 4280.435(k). Discretionary points may only be assigned to initial grants.

Assignment of discretionary points must include a written justification. Permissible justifications include projects that meet special Secretary of Agriculture initiatives such as projects that assist communities recover economically from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic; ensuring all rural residents have equitable access to RD programs and benefits from RD funded projects; and reducing climate pollution

and increasing resilience to the impacts of climate change through economic support to rural communities. The website <https://www.rd.usda.gov/priority-points> has additional data on the Secretary of Agriculture initiatives.

The number of points to be awarded will be determined by the impact of the project on the stated initiative.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

1. Federal Award Notices.

Successful applicants will receive notification for funding from their USDA Rural Development State Office. Applicants must comply with all applicable statutes and regulations before the grant award will be approved. Unsuccessful applications will receive notification by mail.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.

All successful applicants will be notified by letter, which will include a Letter of Conditions, and a Letter of Intent to Meet Conditions. This letter is not an authorization to begin performance. If the applicant wishes to consider beginning performance prior to the grant being officially closed, all pre-award costs must be approved in writing and in advance by the Agency. The grant will be considered officially awarded when all conditions in the Letter of Conditions have been met and the Agency obligates the funding for the Project.

Additional requirements that apply to grantees selected for this program can be found in 7 CFR part 4280, subpart E; the Grants and Agreements regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture codified in 2 CFR Chapter IV, which incorporates the new Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulations at 2 CFR part 200, and successor regulations. In addition, all recipients of Federal financial assistance are required to report information about first-tier sub-awards and executive compensation (see 2 CFR part 170). You will be required to have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (Pub. L. 109-282) reporting requirements (see 2 CFR 170.200(b), unless you are exempt under 2 CFR 170.110(b)).

The following additional requirements apply to grantees selected for this program:

(a) Form RD 4280-2 "Rural Business-Cooperative Service Financial Assistance Agreement."

(b) Letter of Conditions.

(c) Form RD 1940-1, "Request for Obligation of Funds."

(d) Form RD 1942–46, “Letter of Intent to Meet Conditions.”

(i) Form RD 400–4, “Assurance Agreement.” Each prospective recipient must sign Form RD 400–4 which assures USDA that the recipient is in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 7 CFR part 15, and other Agency regulations. Form RD 400–4 also provides that no person will be discriminated against based on race, color, or national origin, in regard to any program or activity for which the recipient receives Federal financial assistance. The grant recipient must include the required nondiscrimination statements in any of their advertisements and brochures. Program participants will be required to collect and maintain data provided by recipients on race, sex, and national origin and ensure recipients collect and maintain this data. Race and ethnicity data will be collected in accordance with OMB **Federal Register** notice, “Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity,” (62 FR 58782), October 30, 1997. Data on recipients’ sex will be collected in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. These items should not be submitted with the application but should be available upon request by the Agency.

The applicant and the ultimate recipient must comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Executive Order 12250, Executive Order 13166 regarding Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and 7 CFR part 1901, subpart E.

(j) SF LLL, “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities,” if applicable.

(k) Form SF 270, “Request for Advance or Reimbursement.”

3. Reporting.

(a) A Financial Status Report and a Project performance activity report will be required of all grantees on a quarterly basis until initial funds are expended and yearly thereafter, if applicable, based on the Federal fiscal year. The grantee will complete the Project within the total time available to it in accordance with the Scope of Work and any necessary modifications thereof prepared by the grantee and approved by the Agency. A final Project performance report will be required with the final Financial Status Report. The final report may serve as the last quarterly report. The final report must provide complete information regarding the jobs created and supported as a result of the grant if applicable. Grantees

must continuously monitor performance to ensure that time schedules are being met, projected work by time periods is being accomplished, and other performance objectives are being achieved. Grantees must submit an original of each report to the Agency no later than 30 days after the end of the quarter. The Project performance reports must include, but not be limited to, the following:

(1) A comparison of actual accomplishments to the objectives established for that period;

(2) Problems, delays, or adverse conditions, if any, which have affected or will affect attainment of overall Project objectives, prevent meeting time schedules or objectives, or preclude the attainment of particular Project work elements during established time periods. This disclosure shall be accompanied by a statement of the action taken or planned to resolve the situation;

(3) Objectives and timetable established for the next reporting period;

(4) Any special reporting requirements, such as jobs supported and created, businesses assisted, or Economic Development which results in improvements in median household incomes, and any other specific requirements, should be placed in the reporting section in the Letter of Conditions; and

(5) Within 90 days after the conclusion of the Project, the grantee will provide a final Project evaluation report. The last quarterly payment will be withheld until the final report is received and approved by the Agency. Even though the grantee may request reimbursement on a monthly basis, the last 3 months of reimbursements will be withheld until a final Project, Project performance, and financial status report are received and approved by the Agency.

G. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)

For general questions about this announcement, please contact your USDA Rural Development State Office provided in the **ADDRESSES** section of this notice.

H. Civil Rights Requirements

All grants made under this notice are subject to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as required by the USDA (7 CFR part 15, subpart A) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, Title IX, Executive Order 13166 (regarding Limited English Proficiency), Executive Order 11246 regarding Equal

Employment Opportunity, and the Equal Credit Opportunity Act of 1974.

I. Other Information

Paperwork Reduction Act

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the information collection requirement contained in this notice is approved by OMB under OMB Control Number 0570–0070.

Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act

All applicants, in accordance with 2 CFR part 25, must have a DUNS number, which can be obtained at no cost via a toll-free request line at (866) 705–5711, or online at: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. Similarly, all applicants must be registered in SAM prior to submitting an application. Applicants may register for the SAM at: <http://www.sam.gov/SAM>. All recipients of Federal financial assistance are required to report information about first-tier sub-awards and executive total compensation in accordance with 2 CFR part 170.

Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, USDA, its Mission Areas, agencies, staff offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language) should contact the responsible Mission Area, agency, the USDA TARGET Center at (202) 720–2600 (voice and TTY); or the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877–8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a complainant should complete a Form AD–3027, *USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form*, which can be obtained online at

<https://www.ocio.usda.gov/document/ad-3027>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

(1) *Mail*: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410; or

(2) *Fax*: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

(3) *Email*: program.intake@usda.gov.
USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Karama Neal,

Administrator, Rural Business-Cooperative Service.

[FR Doc. 2022-00653 Filed 1-13-22; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-XY-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

Speedway Solar Project: Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and Hold Public Scoping Meeting on February 2, 2022

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and hold public scoping meeting.

SUMMARY: The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) announces its intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and to hold a virtual public scoping meeting in connection with possible impacts related to a project proposed by Speedway Solar LLC (Speedway Solar). The primary scope of the EIS is to evaluate the environmental impacts of and alternatives to Speedway Solar's application for financial assistance to develop the Speedway Solar Project (Project), a 199-megawatt (MW) solar array using photovoltaic (PV) modules on private, primarily agricultural lands in Shelby County, Indiana. RUS is considering funding this application, thereby making the proposed Project an undertaking subject to review under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). RUS has determined that a loan for the Project would be a federal action and is, therefore, subject to National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review.

DATES: One virtual public scoping meeting webinar will be held on February 2, 2022, from 6:00 p.m. EST–8:00 p.m. EST via Zoom. The public scoping meeting will be conducted in a virtual format with RUS and Speedway Solar representatives. Attendees will be able to submit comments during the virtual public meeting orally or via the chat function. The public scoping meeting will be recorded and kept as part of the Project record. Equal weight will be given to oral and written (chat) comments. More information about the virtual public scoping meeting can be found at: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/resources/environmental-studies/impact-statements>.

Written requests to participate as a “consulting party” or to provide comments for consideration during the scoping process for the proposed Project must be received on or before February 14, 2022.

ADDRESSES: To request “consulting party” status, submit comments, or for further information, please contact: SpeedwaySolarEIS@usda.gov. Although electronic submittal is strongly encouraged, written comments may also be submitted by regular mail to United States Department of Agriculture, Attention: Peter Steinour, Mail Stop 1570, Rural Utilities Service, WEP/EES, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20250.

Project-related information will be available at RUS's and Speedway Solar's websites located at: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/resources/environmental-studies/impact-statements>, and <https://speedwaysolar.com/>. This includes the Alternative Evaluation and Site Selection Studies prepared for the project. Project information will also be available at the Shelby County Public Library Morristown Branch at 127 E Main St., Morristown, IN.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The RUS is the lead federal agency, as defined at 40 CFR 1508.1(o), for preparation of the EIS. With this notice, federal and state agencies and federally-recognized Tribes with jurisdiction or special expertise are invited to be cooperating agencies. Such agencies or tribes may make a request to RUS to be a cooperating agency by contacting the RUS contact provided in this notice. Designated cooperating agencies have certain responsibilities to support the NEPA and scoping process, as specified at 40 CFR 1501.8.

In addition, RUS invites any affected federal, state, and local agencies, Tribes, and other interested persons to comment on the scope, alternatives, and

significant issues to be analyzed in depth in the EIS.

Public participation is an integral component of the environmental review process for federal actions. Public participation will be especially important during the scoping phase of the proposed Project. The RUS will be seeking information, comments, and assistance from federal, State, and local agencies, Tribes, and other individuals who may be interested in or affected by the proposed Project. This input will be used in preparing the Draft EIS.

Comments submitted during the scoping process should be in writing. The comments should describe as clearly and completely as possible any issues, concerns, or input commenters may have so that they can be addressed appropriately in the EIS.

The RUS is considering funding this application, thereby making the proposed Project an undertaking subject to review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), 16 U.S.C. 470(f), and its implementing regulation, “Protection of Historic Properties” (36 CFR part 800). Any party wishing to participate directly with RUS as a “consulting party” in Section 106 review may submit a written request to the RUS contact provided below. Pursuant to 36 CFR 800.3(f)(3), RUS will consider, and provide a timely response to, any and all requests for consulting party status.

The Project will consist of a 199-megawatt (MW) solar array using photovoltaic (PV) modules on private lands in Shelby County, Indiana. The Project consists of a 199-MW solar array that will utilize PV modules. The Project consists of two major components: PV solar arrays (the main Project footprint) and transmission interconnection facilities (a collector substation). The Project will be located entirely on privately owned farmland in a rural area in Shelby County, Indiana. The Application Area encompasses approximately 1,800 acres. Within the Application Area, construction will occur on an approximately 1,100-acre project area.

Speedway Solar entered into a power purchase agreement with Wabash Valley Power Alliance (WVPA) for the solar and energy storage project. WVPA's objective is to provide safe, adequate, and reliable power to its members at the lowest reasonable cost. The Project will allow the Applicant to provide the additional generation capacity needed by WVPA to achieve these goals and to serve electrical needs within the service territories of their member cooperatives.

Among the alternatives that RUS will address in the EIS is the No Action