

119<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# H. R. 9101

To improve transparency, accessibility, and accountability in the administration of rural development grant programs at the Department of Agriculture, and for other purposes.

---

## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 2, 2026

Ms. LETLOW introduced the following bill; which was referred to the  
Committee on Agriculture

---

## A BILL

To improve transparency, accessibility, and accountability in the administration of rural development grant programs at the Department of Agriculture, and for other purposes.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Rural Grants Trans-

5       parency Act”.

6       **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7       The Congress finds the following:

1           (1) Rural communities often lack staff capacity  
2           and technical expertise to navigate complex Federal  
3           grant programs.

4           (2) Applicants routinely report difficulty under-  
5           standing eligibility for, application steps for,  
6           timelines under, evaluation criteria under, and rea-  
7           sons for rejection from rural development programs.

8           (3) Providing clear, consistent, and centralized  
9           information improves access to such programs for  
10          small towns, rural nonprofits, cooperatives, and per-  
11          sistent-poverty counties and parishes.

12          (4) Increasing transparency in Federal grant  
13          processes can be achieved without additional appro-  
14          priations.

15 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

16          In this Act:

17           (1) **COVERED PROGRAM.**—The term “covered  
18           program” means any grant program administered by  
19           the Secretary of Agriculture through Rural Develop-  
20           ment, including programs administered by—

21                   (A) the Rural Utilities Service;

22                   (B) the Rural Housing Service; or

23                   (C) the Rural Business–Cooperative Serv-  
24           ice.

1           (2) QUARTERLY.—The term “quarterly” means  
2 not less frequently than once every 90 days.

3           (3) ROADMAP.—The term “Roadmap” means,  
4 with respect to a covered program, the Rural Grant  
5 Transparency Roadmap developed for the program  
6 under section 4.

7           (4) RURAL DEVELOPMENT STATE OFFICE CON-  
8 TACT INFORMATION.—The term “rural development  
9 State office contact information” means, with re-  
10 spect to a covered program, to the appropriate divi-  
11 sion or program contact within each State rural de-  
12 velopment office that is responsible for administering  
13 the covered program, and is not solely a general hot-  
14 line or switchboard number.

15           (5) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means  
16 the Secretary of Agriculture.

17 **SEC. 4. RURAL GRANT TRANSPARENCY ROADMAP.**

18           (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall develop,  
19 publish, and maintain a publicly accessible Rural Grant  
20 Transparency Roadmap for each covered program.

21           (b) REQUIRED COMPONENTS.—The Roadmap for a  
22 covered program shall include—

23                 (1) a plain-language description of the program;

24                 (2) a step-by-step explanation of application re-  
25 quirements;

1           (3) a standardized checklist of materials re-  
2           quired in applications;

3           (4) in the case of a competitive program, a  
4           summary of the evaluation criteria used under the  
5           program;

6           (5) common reasons for ineligibility for the pro-  
7           gram, or rejection of an application;

8           (6) electronic links to forms and guidance docu-  
9           ments;

10          (7) rural development State office contact infor-  
11          mation relevant to the program; and

12          (8) a quarterly-updated list of open and upcom-  
13          ing funding opportunities.

14          (c) **FORMAT AND ACCESSIBILITY.**—The Roadmap for  
15 a covered program shall—

16           (1) be accessible through a single, consolidated  
17           webpage on the Rural Development website;

18           (2) be written in plain language suitable for  
19           small, resource-limited rural communities; and

20           (3) be available in formats accessible to individ-  
21           uals with disabilities in compliance with section 508  
22           of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

23          (d) **LIMITATIONS.**—This Act shall not be interpreted  
24 to—



1           (2) guidance on how to strengthen future sub-  
2       missions.

3       (c) USE OF EXISTING SYSTEMS.—The Secretary  
4 shall provide notifications under this section using existing  
5 electronic or administrative systems, and this section shall  
6 not be interpreted to require the development of new infor-  
7 mation technology systems.

8 **SEC. 6. RURAL GRANT AWARD DATA ACCESSIBILITY.**

9       (a) DATABASE.—The Secretary shall maintain a pub-  
10 licly accessible, searchable database of awards made under  
11 a covered program, updated quarterly, containing—

12           (1) the name of the award recipient;

13           (2) the county or parish in which the awarded  
14       project is located;

15           (3) the amount of the award;

16           (4) the name of the program and

17           (5) a brief description of the awarded project.

18       (b) PROTECTION OF SENSITIVE INFORMATION.—The  
19 Secretary may not disclose, or authorize the disclosure of  
20 personally identifiable or confidential business information  
21 under this Act.

22       (c) USE OF EXISTING RESOURCES.—The Secretary  
23 shall utilize existing Department of Agriculture resources  
24 to carry out this section.

1 **SEC. 7. PUBLICATION OF SCORING CRITERIA.**

2 (a) REQUIREMENT.—For each competitive covered  
3 program, the Secretary shall publish—

- 4 (1) all scoring factors;
- 5 (2) the weight assigned to each factor;
- 6 (3) tie-breaker rules; and
- 7 (4) any statutory or regulatory priority areas.

8 (b) LIMITATION.—This Act shall not be interpreted  
9 to authorize the Secretary to create new scoring factors  
10 or modify existing statutory requirements.

11 **SEC. 8. TRAINING FOR STATE AND LOCAL USDA OFFICES.**

12 (a) ANNUAL TRAINING.—The Secretary shall ensure  
13 that State, parish, and county rural development offices  
14 receive annual training on—

- 15 (1) the Rural Grant Transparency Roadmap for  
16 each covered program;
- 17 (2) the common challenges faced by applicants  
18 for each covered program; and
- 19 (3) the procedures for providing accurate, con-  
20 sistent information to applicants for a covered pro-  
21 gram who are located in a rural area.

22 (b) USE OF EXISTING RESOURCES.—This section  
23 shall be carried out by existing personnel of the Depart-  
24 ment of Agriculture.

1 **SEC. 9. NO ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS.**

2       This Act shall not be interpreted to authorize or re-  
3 quire the appropriation of any funds to carry out this Act.

4 **SEC. 10. DEADLINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION.**

5       The Secretary shall implement all requirements of  
6 this Act within 180 days after the date of the enactment  
7 of this Act.

○