

# Solid Waste Management Grants Program

---

**Fiscal Year 2026**

## **Notice of Funding Opportunity**

**Funding Opportunity Number: SWMFY26**

**Publication Date:** October 1, 2025

**Application Due Date:** December 31, 2025

KARL  
ELMSHAEUSER  
Digitally signed by KARL  
ELMSHAEUSER  
Date: 2025.09.24  
15:27:48 -04'00'

Karl Elmshaeuser  
Administrator  
Rural Utilities Service  
USDA Rural Development

## PROGRAM SOLICITATION INFORMATION

**Funding Opportunity Title:** Solid Waste Management Grants Program

**Funding Opportunity Number:** SWMFY26

**Announcement Type:** Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO or Notice)

**Assistance Listing Number:** 10.762

**Dates:** Completed electronic applications must be submitted through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET) on December 31, 2025. This program will start accepting applications on October 1, 2025. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

**Executive Summary:**

The Rural Utilities Service (RUS or the Agency), an agency of the Rural Development (RD) mission area of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), is announcing the acceptance of applications under the Solid Waste Management Grants (SWMG) Program for Fiscal Year (FY) 2026, subject to the availability of funding. The SWMG Program is designed to assist communities by awarding grant funding to qualified, eligible organizations that provide technical assistance and training to improve the planning and management of solid waste sites in rural areas to help reduce or eliminate the pollution of water resources. This includes project proposals that support the financial and operational sustainability of systems through the development of site planning, operation, closure, and future use plans that consider revenue enhancements, disaster recovery, and other process improvements. Also, project proposals should consider addressing contamination caused by emerging contaminants, such as but not limited to Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). Based on FY 25 funding levels, funding is anticipated to be approximately \$4,000,000 for FY26. All applicants are responsible for any expenses incurred in developing their applications.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Program Solicitation Information .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.0 Program Description .....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 Key Priorities .....	4
1.2 Purpose of the Program .....	4
1.3 Statutory And Regulatory Authority .....	4
1.4 Definitions .....	4
1.5 Application of Awards .....	4
<b>2.0 Federal Award Information .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3.0 Eligibility Information .....</b>	<b>5</b>
3.1 Eligible Applicants .....	5
3.2 Cost Sharing or Matching .....	6
3.3 Other .....	6
<b>4.0 Application and Submission Information .....</b>	<b>6</b>
4.1 Address to Request Application Package .....	6
4.2 Content and Form of Application Submission .....	7
4.3 System for Award Management and Unique Entity Identifier .....	7
4.4 Submission Dates and Times .....	7
4.5 Intergovernmental Review .....	7
4.6 Funding Restrictions .....	8
4.7 Other Submission Requirements .....	8
<b>5.0 Application Review Information .....</b>	<b>8</b>
5.1 Criteria .....	8
5.2 Review Selection Processes .....	11
<b>6.0 Federal Award Administration Information .....</b>	<b>12</b>
6.1 Federal Award Notices .....	12
6.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements .....	12
6.3 Reporting .....	13
<b>7.0 Federal Award Agency Contacts .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>8.0 Other Information .....</b>	<b>13</b>
8.1 Paperwork Reduction Act .....	13
8.2 National Environmental Policy Act .....	13
8.3 Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act .....	13
8.4 Civil Rights Act .....	13
8.5 Equal Opportunity for Religious Organizations .....	14
8.6 Nondiscrimination Statement .....	14

## 1.0 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

### 1.1 KEY PRIORITIES

The Agency encourages applicants to consider projects that will focus on key priorities identified in Section 5.1, Criteria, of this NOFO. To be considered for administrative points, the applicant's work plan must include a separate section titled, "Administrative Points" that provides information detailing how the project proposal will support the key priorities.

### 1.2 PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

The SWMG Program is designed to help qualified, eligible organizations that provide technical assistance and training to:

- (i) Provide technical assistance and/or training to reduce the solid waste stream through reduction, recycling, and reuse.
- (ii) Provide training to enhance operator skills in maintaining and operating active landfills.
- (iii) Provide technical assistance and/or training for operators of landfills which are closed or will be closed in the near future with the development/implementation of closure plans, future land use plans, safety and maintenance planning, and closure scheduling within permit requirements.
- (iv) Evaluate current landfill conditions to determine the threats to water resources.

The preceding includes project proposals that support the financial and operational sustainability of sites through the development of site planning, operation, closure, and future use plans considering revenue enhancements, disaster recovery, and other process improvements. Project proposals should also consider addressing contamination caused by emerging contaminants, such as but not limited to Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), and promote the collection of hazardous materials, such as electronics, pharmaceutical, and other hazardous household waste.

Eligible costs include paying certain expenses associated with the delivery of the services above, in conformance with applicable statutory and regulatory authorities.

### 1.3 STATUTORY AND REGULATORY AUTHORITY

The SWMG Program is authorized under Section 310B(b) of the [Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act](#) (7 U.S.C. 1932(b)), as amended, the "ConAct") and implemented by [7 CFR part 1775](#), Technical Assistance Grants. This Notice is subject to the Federal statutes and regulations listed at [7 CFR 1775.8](#), Other Federal statutes, and other relevant regulations and Executive Orders.

### 1.4 DEFINITIONS

The definitions applicable to this notice are published at [7 CFR 1775.2](#) Definitions.

### 1.5 APPLICATION OF AWARDS

The Agency will review, evaluate, and score applications received in response to this Notice based on 7 CFR § [1775.11](#), Priority, and this NOFO, and funding will be awarded in consideration of the established

criteria. The Agency advises all interested parties that the applicant bears the full burden in preparing and submitting an application in response to this notice regardless of whether funding is appropriated for the SWMG Program in FY 2026.

## 2.0 FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

*Type of Award:* Grants.

*Fiscal Year Funds:* FY 2026

*Available Funds:* Dependent upon FY 2026 appropriations. Funding is anticipated to be approximately \$4,000,000.

*Award Amounts:* No minimum or maximum award amount.

*Anticipated Award Date:* June 2026

*Performance Period:* October 1, 2026 to September 30, 2027

*Renewal or Supplemental Awards:* With the submission of a new application, existing grantees are eligible to compete with applications for new Federal awards. Grant applications must be submitted during the application window.

*Type of Assistance Instrument:* Grant Agreement

## 3.0 ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

### 3.1 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants must meet the eligibility requirements of 7 CFR §1775.65, Eligibility.

(a) Entities eligible for grants must either be:

(1) Private nonprofit organizations with tax exempt status designated by the Internal Revenue Service. A nonprofit organization is defined as any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization that:

(i) Is operated primarily for scientific, education, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest.

(ii) Is not organized primarily for profit.

(iii) Uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve, and/or expand its operations.

(2) Public bodies.

(3) Federally acknowledged or State-recognized Native American Tribe or group.

(4) Academic institutions.

(b) Entities must be legally established and located within a state as defined in [§ 1775.2](#).

(c) Organizations must be incorporated by December 31 of the year the application period occurs to be eligible for funds.

(d) Private businesses, Federal agencies, and individuals are ineligible for these grants.

(e) Applicants must also have the proven ability; background; experience, as evidenced by the organization's satisfactory completion of project(s) similar to those proposed; legal authority; and actual capacity to provide technical assistance and/or training on a regional basis to associations as provided in [§ 1775.63](#). To meet the requirement of actual capacity, an applicant must either:

(1) Have the necessary resources to provide technical assistance and/or training to associations in rural areas through its staff, or

(2) Be assisted by an affiliate or member organization which has such background and experience and which agrees, in writing, that it will provide the assistance, or

(3) Contract with a nonaffiliated organization for not more than 49 percent of the grant to provide the proposed assistance.

The applicant and its principals must not be debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from participation in USDA programs, in accordance with 2 CFR parts 180 and 417. The applicant must not be delinquent on any federal debt, nor have any outstanding judgment obtained by the U.S. in a Federal court. Upon receipt of an application, prior to award, and prior to disbursement of federal funds, the agency will screen the applicant and its principals through the Do Not Pay System, as required by 31 U.S.C. § 3354, to verify eligibility with respect to debarment, suspension, and any unresolved federal debts. Applicants are responsible for resolving any issues identified in the Do Not Pay System; if such issues are not resolved by the deadlines specified in this Notice, the agency may proceed to award funds to other eligible applicants. Applicants are responsible for compliance with all applicable regulations, including 2 CFR Parts 180 and 417. See Section 4.3 of this Notice for information pertaining to the creation of the Unique Entity Identifier through the System for Award Management, which is required to complete this review.

### 3.2 COST SHARING OR MATCHING

There are no cost sharing or matching requirements associated with this grant.

### 3.3 OTHER

All submitted proposals must meet the intent outlined in [7 CFR 1775.63](#), Objectives. To be determined an eligible project, grant requests must be made for the purposes listed within [7 CFR 1775.66](#), Purpose.

## 4.0 APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

### 4.1 ADDRESS TO REQUEST APPLICATION PACKAGE

The FY 2026 SWMG Program Application Guide, copies of necessary forms and samples, and the SWMG Program regulation are available at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-environmental->

[programs/solid-waste-management-grants](#). Application information is also available at <https://www.grants.gov/>.

#### 4.2 CONTENT AND FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

To be considered for funding, applicants must be an eligible entity and must submit a complete application by the deadline date. Applicants should consult the cost principles and general administrative requirements for grants pertaining to their organizational type to prepare the budget and complete other parts of the application.

Carefully review this Notice, [7 CFR part 1775](#), and the FY 2026 SWMG Program Application Guide, which collectively detail all required items for a complete application. The Agency will not solicit or consider new scoring or eligibility information that is submitted after the application deadline; however, the Agency reserves the right to contact applicants to seek clarification on materials contained in the submitted application during the eligibility review process. See the FY 2026 SWMG Program Application Guide for a full discussion of each required item. For requirements of completed grant applications, refer to [7 CFR 1775.10](#), Applications. The items at 7 CFR 1775.10(c)(3), (4), and (5) are no longer required to be separately submitted as part of the application as they are covered under System for Award Management and Unique Entity Identifier. The application and any materials sent with it become Federal records by law and cannot be returned to you.

#### 4.3 SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT AND UNIQUE ENTITY IDENTIFIER

(a) At the time of application, each applicant must have an active registration in the System for Award Management (SAM) before submitting its application in accordance with 2 CFR part 25. To register in SAM, entities will be required to obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). Instructions for obtaining the UEI are available at <https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration>.

(b) Each applicant must maintain an active SAM registration, with current, accurate and complete information, at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application under consideration by a Federal awarding agency.

(c) Each applicant must ensure they complete the Financial Assistance General Certifications and Representations in SAM.

(d) Applicants must provide a valid UEI in its application, unless determined exempt under 2 CFR 25.110, Exceptions.

(e) The Agency will not make an award until the applicant has complied with all SAM requirements including providing the UEI. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Agency is ready to make an award, the 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.

#### 4.4 SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Applications and supporting materials must be submitted electronically and be received by [www.grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) no later than 11:59 p.m., ET, on December 31, 2025, to be eligible for FY 2026 funding. If the submission deadline falls on Saturday, Sunday, or a federal holiday, the application is due the next business day. Late or incomplete applications will not be eligible for FY 2026 grant funding.

#### 4.5 INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

Executive Order (EO) 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs,” does not apply to this program.

#### 4.6 FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

Applications must be for eligible purposes as defined above, and must comply with the limitations found within [7 CFR 1775.5](#), Limitations.

#### 4.7 OTHER SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Applications and supporting information will not be accepted via fax, electronic mail, or any other medium other than through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

### 5.0 APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

#### 5.1 CRITERIA

All applications that are complete and eligible will be scored and ranked competitively. The categories for scoring criteria used are the following:

Criteria No.	Criteria	Points
1	Applicant Status: (5 points max)	
	Multi-State and National Organizations	5 points
	Single State Organizations	3 points
2	Applicant experience and history at developing and implementing successful technical assistance and training programs projects: (10 points max or deducted)	
	More than ten years of experience	10 points
	One to ten years of experience	5 points
	Any previous awards within the past 3 years that received a no-cost time extension or were not fully expended within the period of performance.	-5 points (points deducted)
	Any previous awards within the past 3 years that failed to meet the approved scope of work or had other performance-related issues.	-10 points (points deducted)
3	Applicant resources – use of grant funds for grantee’s staff or affiliated staff versus contract personnel to carry out the proposed project: (10 points max)	
	At least 75% staff	10 points



	Between 50% and 74.99% staff	5 points
	Less than 50% staff *	Ineligible
4	Population of proposed area(s) to be served (based on 2020 Decennial Census data): (20 points max)	
	Less than 2,500	20 points
	Less than 5,500	10 points
	5,500 or more	0 points
5	Median Household income (MHI) of proposed area(s) to be served (based on American Community Survey data from 2017-2021 5-year period): (10 points max)	
	Less than 80% of the SNMHI (State Non-metropolitan Median Household Income)	10 points
	80% to 100% of the SNMHI	5 points
	More than 100% of the SNMHI	0 points
6	Project Duration: (5 points max)	
	Projects providing technical assistance and/or training that accomplish the objective within a 12 month or less time frame	5 points
	Over 12 months	0 points
7	Needs Assessment - The problem or issue being addressed is clearly defined, supported by data, and addresses the need. Up to 5 points may be awarded for projects that: (1) improve financial and operational sustainability; (2) support the remediation of emerging contaminants, such as PFAS; and (3) promote the collection of hazardous materials, such as electronics, pharmaceuticals, and other hazardous household waste. (15 points max)	Up to 15 points
8	Goals and objectives are clearly defined, tied to the need as defined in the work plan, and are measurable. Up to 5 points may be awarded for projects that: (1) improve financial and operational sustainability; (2) support the remediation of emerging contaminants, such as PFAS; and (3) promote the collection of hazardous materials, such as electronics, pharmaceuticals, and other hazardous household waste. (15 points max)	Up to 15 points

9	Work plan - Clearly articulates a well thought out approach to accomplishing objectives and clearly identifies who will be served by project. (1) improve financial and operational sustainability; (2) support the remediation of emerging contaminants, such as PFAS; and (3) promote the collection of hazardous materials, such as electronics, pharmaceuticals, and other hazardous household waste. (30 points max)	Up to 30 points
10	Actual assistance provided (Projects using multiple methods may receive a maximum total score of 30 points for this criterion):	
	Applicant is providing “hands-on” or on-site technical assistance and training primarily to solid waste management systems managers and operators to improve operation, maintenance, and sustainability. This includes support applications for capital financing.	15 points
	Applicant is providing technical assistance to solid waste sites to address the contamination of drinking water and surface water supplies by emerging contaminants, including per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), and hazardous materials.	10 points
	Applicant is providing technical assistance primarily through the distribution of education materials and other outreach methods.	5 points
11	Evaluation methods are specific to the activity, clearly defined, measurable, with expected project outcomes. (20 points max)	Up to 20 points
12	Matching Funds and In-Kind Support: (15 points max)	
	Demonstrated commitment of non-federal resources of more than 25% of total budget.	15 points
	Demonstrated commitment of non-federal resources 10-25% of total budget.	10 points
	Between 1-10% of non-federal resources.	5 points
	No matching funds or in-kind support	0 points
13	Sustainability: Applicant demonstrates ability to sustain project after without federal award using a thorough financial analysis, to include: cash on hand, projected revenues, outside source contributions, and shows a steady increase to sustainability within 5 years. (5 points max)	Up to 5 points

14	Administrator Discretion: RUS Administrator may provide additional points based on the following factors below. (15 points max)**	Up to 15 points
----	---	-----------------

\* [7 CFR 1775.65](#) Eligibility - (e)(3) Applicants may contract with a nonaffiliated organization for not more than 49 percent of the grant to provide the proposed assistance. RUS’s definition of an affiliated organization is as follows:

In corporate law and taxes, an affiliate is a company that is related to another company, usually by being in the position of a member or a subordinate role (must be verified by organizational documentation). Two companies may be affiliated if one company has control over the other or if both are controlled by a third company. One corporation can be affiliated with another corporation by shareholdings, by holding a minority interest, or one corporation might be a subsidiary of another.

\*\*Administrator Discretion Points – To be considered for Administrator Points the applicant’s work plan must include a separate section titled: “Administrator Points”. In this section each individual Administrative Discretion Points item must include clear references to the type of technical assistance and training to be provided, content focus, measurable deliverables and outcomes, such as timeframes and the number of systems to receive support, and demonstrated subject-matter expertise.

Administrator Points may be considered only for applications that address one or more of the following:

- Support of financial and operational sustainability of solid waste facilities through the development of site planning, operation, closure, and future use plans that consider revenue enhancements, disaster recovery, and other process improvements. This includes assisting, through creation, support, or review, of capital financing applications, such as analysis of technical documentation and available project alternatives.
- Identification, remediation, or other support related to emerging contaminants, such as PFAS. Efforts should primarily focus on the impacts of emerging contaminants in solid waste sites on water supplies, and methods to reduce or remove their presence through hands-on and on-site technical assistance and training.; and
- Promoting the collection of hazardous materials, such as but not limited to electronics, pharmaceuticals, and other hazardous household waste. Efforts should primarily focus on the impacts of hazardous waste in solid waste sites, and methods to reduce or remove their presence through hands-on and on-site technical assistance and training.

The Administrator Discretion Points will be awarded solely on the aforementioned factors, with up to 5 points for each category and a cumulative total of 15 points.

## 5.2 REVIEW SELECTION PROCESSES

RUS will acknowledge the application’s receipt via an email to the applicant. The following actions will be taken:

(a) Incomplete or ineligible applications as of the deadline for submission will not be considered. If an application is determined to be incomplete or ineligible, the applicant will be notified in writing.

(b) Complete, eligible applications will be evaluated competitively by a review team, composed of at least two RUS employees selected from the Water Programs Division. They will make overall recommendations based on the program elements found in [7 CFR part 1775](#) and the criteria presented in this Notice. They will award points as described in the scoring criteria in [7 CFR 1775.11](#), Priority, and this Notice. Each application will receive a score based on the averages of the reviewers’ scores and

discretionary points awarded by the RUS Administrator. RUS reserves the right to request additional information after an application is determined to be complete to minimize the risk of duplication of other federal efforts.

(c) Applications will be ranked, and grants awarded based upon the scoring results and funding availability. At RUS's discretion, projects scoring too low may not be awarded funding even if funding remains available.

(d) Regardless of the score an application receives, if RUS determines that the project is technically infeasible, RUS will notify the applicant, in writing and no further action will be taken.

## 6.0 FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

### 6.1 FEDERAL AWARD NOTICES

#### 1. *Federal Award Notices.*

(a) *Application Outcomes.* There are four possible outcomes following the submission of an application under the SWMG Program. RUS reserves the right to make no grant awards if all applications are ineligible, incomplete or do not meet the established program objectives and priorities. RUS may determine that the application is: (1) Eligible and selected for funding, (2) Eligible but offered fewer funds than requested, (3) Eligible but not selected for funding, or (4) Ineligible for the grant.

(b) *Award Notices.* Applicants selected for funding will be sent an award letter, accompanied by a grant agreement, which outlines the terms and conditions of the award, and other applicable documents. Pursuant to the Grant Agreement, grant funds may be released over the course of the period of performance in reimbursement for eligible expenses and approved activities which do not duplicate similar federal efforts or tasks. The Grant Agreement may also include reporting and pre-approval requirements consistent with [7 CFR part 1775](#) and programmatic guidance which, if not met, may result in a delay in reimbursement, disallowance of expense, or a suspension of the grant.

(c) *Payments/Reimbursements* Grantees will be reimbursed as delineated at [7 CFR 1775.18](#), Fund disbursement, and the Grant Agreement.

(d) *Scope of Services.* Any change in the scope of the project, budget adjustments of more than 10 percent, or other modifications must get written prior approval in accordance with , Grant cancellation or major changes, and the Grant Agreement.

(e) *Prevailing Wages.* All laborers, apprentices and mechanics employed by contractors and subcontractors on projects funded directly by or assisted in whole or in part by and through the Federal Government pursuant to the ConAct shall be paid wages at rates not less than those prevailing on projects of a character similar in the locality as determined by the Secretary of Labor in accordance with subchapter IV of chapter 31 of title 40, United States Code. Further details on eligible applicants and projects may be found in the relevant regulations listed in Section C.

### 6.2 ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

(a) *General.* There are no known unusual Administrative and National Policy Requirements associated with the SWMG Program. Additional requirements that apply to grantees selected can be found in the Grants and Agreements regulations of the Department of Agriculture codified in 2 CFR parts 180, 200, 400, 415, 417, 418, 421; 2 CFR parts 25 and 170, and in Executive Orders and programmatic guidance.

(b) *Geospatial Data*. Awardee, and any and all contracts entered into by the awardee with respect to the award, shall ensure that geospatial data required to be collected and provided to the agency, conforms with the requirements of USDA Department Regulation DR-3465-001 and the Geospatial Metadata Standards set forth in DM 3465-001, which can be obtained online at [usda.gov/directives/dr-3465-001](https://usda.gov/directives/dr-3465-001) and [usda.gov/directives/dm-3465-00](https://usda.gov/directives/dm-3465-00).

## 6.3 REPORTING

Performance reporting, including applicable forms, narratives, and other documentation, are to be completed and submitted in accordance with the provisions of [7 CFR 1775.20](#), Reporting, and the Grant Agreement. Further, all grantees must submit an audit or financial information covering the defined period of performance as outlined in [7 CFR 1775.21](#), Audit or financial statements, and the Grant Agreement.

## 7.0 FEDERAL AWARD AGENCY CONTACTS

For general questions about this announcement, please contact Sandra Alarcon at [Water-RD@usda.gov](mailto:Water-RD@usda.gov). The SWMGs Program website also provides up to date contact information at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-environmental-programs/solid-waste-management-grants>.

## 8.0 OTHER INFORMATION

### 8.1 PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), the information collection requirements associated with the programs, as covered in this notice, have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under OMB Control Number 0572-0112.

### 8.2 NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

All recipients under this Notice are subject to the requirements of [7 CFR part 1b](#), National Environmental Policy Act. However, awards for technical assistance and training under this Notice are normally classified as a Categorical Exclusion (CE) according to 7 CFR 1b(4)(c). RUS will review each grant application to determine its compliance with 7 CFR part [1b](#). The applicant may be asked to provide additional information or documentation to assist RUS with this determination.

### 8.3 FEDERAL FUNDING ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY ACT

All applicants, in accordance with 2 CFR part 25, must be registered in SAM and have a UEI number as stated in Section D.3 of this notice. 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.

### 8.4 CIVIL RIGHTS ACT

All awards of Federal financial assistance made under this notice are subject to applicable civil rights laws, which may include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1973, and the Equal Credit Opportunity Act.

## 8.5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

(a) Faith-based organizations may apply for this award on the same basis as any other organization, as set forth at, and subject to the protections and requirements of, this part and any applicable constitutional and statutory requirements, including 42 U.S.C. 2000bb et seq. USDA will not, in the selection of recipients, discriminate for or against an organization on the basis of the organization's religious character, motives, or affiliation, or lack thereof, or on the basis of conduct that would not be considered grounds to favor or disfavor a similarly situated secular organization.

(b) A faith-based organization that participates in this program will retain its independence from the Government and may continue to carry out its mission consistent with religious freedom and conscience protections in Federal law. Religious accommodations may also be sought under many of these religious freedom and conscience protection laws.

(c) A faith-based organization may not use direct Federal financial assistance from USDA to support or engage in any explicitly religious activities except when consistent with the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment and any other applicable requirements. An organization receiving Federal financial assistance also may not, in providing services funded by USDA, or in their outreach activities related to such services, discriminate against a program beneficiary or prospective program beneficiary on the basis of religion, a religious belief, a refusal to hold a religious belief, or a refusal to attend or participate in a religious practice.

## 8.6 NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

In accordance with Federal civil rights laws and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the 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, 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.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the State or local Agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
- (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.