

# USDA: Invests over \$664,000 to improve equitable access to jobs, business opportunities, education and housing in Wisconsin

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**STEVENS POINT, Wis., Nov. 18, 2021** – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Wisconsin State Director Julie Lassa announced that the Department is [investing \\$86 million to improve equitable access](#) to jobs, business opportunities, education, housing and health care for people who live and work in rural areas. The investments are part of the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to ensure that people living in rural communities have equitable access to the infrastructure and opportunities often taken for granted by people living in urban and suburban areas.

“When we invest in housing, education and economic development in rural Wisconsin, we build opportunity and prosperity for the people who call our rural communities' home,” Lassa said. “Today's announcement builds on the historic investments made possible by the American Rescue Plan Act signed into law by President Biden to ensure equity at a time when people living in underserved areas are hurting. USDA's investments will help Wisconsinites and our state build back better.”

This announcement highlights 218 investments that USDA is making in six programs specifically designed to help people and businesses in rural areas. The funding will help more than 425,000 people in 46 states, Puerto Rico and the Western Pacific. It reflects the many ways USDA Rural Development helps rural residents, businesses and communities across the United States address economic development, infrastructure and social service needs. It will help low-income people

make health and safety repairs to their homes. It also will help colleges that serve Tribal populations upgrade campus buildings and services.

In Wisconsin:

- **Community Development Alternatives Inc, Stockbridge-Munsee Community and Couleecap Inc** will collectively receive \$313,000 through the [Housing Preservation Grant](#) Program to help 49 low- and very-low-income people make health and safety repairs to their homes. These investments will support healthier and happier lives for these homeowners.
- **Rebuilding Together Inc**, an organization headquartered in Washington D.C., will use a \$112,700 [Rural Community Development Initiative Grant](#) to develop the capacity of ten rural non-profit community based housing organizations across the country including Wisconsin. These recipients will undertake projects related to housing, community facilities or community and economic development in rural areas. Rebuilding Together provides technical assistance, training and financial assistance to strengthen the recipients' organizational capacity as they work in their local communities.
- **College of Menominee Nation** will use a \$175,500 [Tribal College Initiative Grant](#) to complete safety and facility improvements at the College of Menominee Nation Keshena campus. Improvements to the commons, library and Sustainable Development Institute will include replacing or upgrading HVAC and A/C, exterior doors to allow for fobbed entrances, roof, lighting and water heater. This is the twentieth year that this recipient has participated in this program.
- **LCO Ojibwe College** will use a \$175,500 Tribal College Initiative Grant to make improvements to the Lac Courte Oreilles (LCO) Ojibwe College campus buildings. Improvements will be made to the Sustainable Agriculture Research Station (LSARS) including equipment to properly operate the activities it provides to the community and for general upkeep of the grounds and maintaining the crops it produces. In addition, two buildings need upgrades to the HVAC systems so that classes and activities may be performed during the winter months. The College also proposes to address the immediate needs of the LSARS including equipment purchases and roof replacement. This is the seventh year that this recipient has participated in this program.

The timing of the awards to College of Menominee Nation and LCO Ojibwe College coincides with Native American Heritage Month, which is celebrated every November to highlight the rich and diverse cultures, traditions, contributions and

histories of Native people. It helps raise awareness about the unique challenges Native people face and the ways in which Tribal citizens have worked to conquer them.

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities and create jobs in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural areas. For more information, visit [www.rd.usda.gov/wi](http://www.rd.usda.gov/wi), call us at 715-345-7600 or email [wi-rd-stateoffice@usda.gov](mailto:wi-rd-stateoffice@usda.gov).

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