

# USDA: Expands Rural Partners Network to Wisconsin

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## **The USDA-led Rural Partners Network expands to 12 Wisconsin counties to help local people create new and lasting economic opportunities**

**Neopit, Wis. November 3, 2022** – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack and Ambassador Susan Rice, White House Domestic Policy Advisor, today announced the expansion of the [Rural Partners Network](#) (RPN) to 12 Wisconsin counties. RPN is an all-of-government program that partners with rural people to access resources and funding to create local jobs, build infrastructure, and support long-term economic stability on their own terms.

Vilsack and [Ambassador Rice](#) are in Wisconsin today meeting with people, businesses and organizations who will benefit from RPN's expansion. This includes an independent meat processor and a Tribal college that are located in two new RPN community networks.

“The Biden-Harris Administration is committed to ensuring that people in rural communities have every opportunity to succeed – and that they can find those opportunities right at home in rural America,” Vilsack said. “Rural people make up America’s spirit and character and provide the everyday essentials our country depends on. We know that when rural people thrive, America thrives. By expanding the [Rural Partners Network](#), we can help these important but often overlooked communities receive their fair share of government resources to keep rural people and economies prepared for the future.”

“Rural America is full of opportunities but these vital communities don’t always have a way to navigate federal agencies or access the resources of the

government,” said Domestic Policy Advisor Susan Rice. “The Rural Partners Network is bringing federal staff directly to rural communities to ensure local leaders have access to federal resources as they build strong and vibrant economies.”

RPN is expanding to the following community networks in Wisconsin:

- Northern Wisconsin Community Network including Ashland, Iron and Price counties
- Greater Menominee Community Network including Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin and Menominee County
- Forest County Community Network
- Northwestern Wisconsin Community Network including Eau Claire, Dunn, Clark, Buffalo, Pepin, and Chippewa counties
- Adams County Visionary Community Network

The Rural Partners Network is providing a blueprint for how federal agencies can better serve rural communities everywhere. This work will ensure rural communities have a voice in policymaking and empower them to get their fair share of federal funds.

For example, Vilsack and Rice today announced investments in two counties selected for the Rural Partners Network:

- In Chippewa County, Crescent Meats, LLC in Cadott will use a \$1.5 million [Meat and Poultry Processing Expansion Program](#) (MPPEP) grant to offset the costs associated with a 19,400 square foot expansion project which will allow Crescent Meats to increase production, add 35 skilled jobs, improve food safety, and streamline processes by adding additional office, dock and storage space.
- In Menominee County, the College of Menominee Nation will use a \$344,895 [Tribal College Initiative Grant](#) to make facility improvements to Glenn Miller Hall. In addition, the college plans to add two work trucks with attachments, and a 7-passenger vehicle to transport staff, students, and faculty.

“The investments announced today create jobs, build a more resilient food supply chain, and strengthen our infrastructure,” said USDA Rural Development State Director for Wisconsin Julie Lassa. “Expanding the Rural Partners Network to Wisconsin will build on investments like these with even more resources that will

benefit rural people and families in our state for generations to come.”

Today’s announcement is part of President Biden’s commitment to ensure all rural communities can benefit from federal resources, including historic funding provided by the American Rescue Plan, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act.

### **Background: Rural Partners Network**

The Rural Partners Network launched in April 2022 in several communities in Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, New Mexico as well as Native American communities in Arizona. Wisconsin is part of the second cohort of states selected for RPN that also includes Alaska, Nevada, North Carolina, West Virginia and Puerto Rico.

Community networks within these states will receive on-the-ground support from full-time federal staff members assigned to provide technical assistance tailored to the community’s unique needs and objectives. These community liaisons live and work in the rural communities they serve, allowing them to develop partnerships with local leaders to promote growth and prosperity for rural families and local communities.

These federal staff members will help rural communities navigate federal programs, build relationships and identify community-driven solutions, and develop successful applications for funding.

Additionally, RPN includes an all-of government strategy supported by more than [20 federal agencies and commissions](#), working closely together with each other, rural communities, and existing programs and policies. Communities also benefit from coordination through other federal efforts such as the [Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities and Economic Revitalization](#) and President Biden’s [Justice40 Initiative](#). The Rural Prosperity Council, co-led by the White House Domestic Policy Council and USDA advises the RPN program and escalates lessons learned through RPN for policy consideration. A team of Rural Desk Officers representing each participating federal entity supports the RPN program and the selected Community Networks.

To deliver on the promise to make federal resources more readily available to underserved communities across rural America, the Biden-Harris Administration will again expand the [Rural Partners Network](#) to additional places later in fiscal year

2023.

Information about the Rural Partners Network is available online at [Rural.gov](https://www.rural.gov).

Under the Biden-Harris Administration, Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities, create jobs and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans 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, tribal and high-poverty areas. For more information, visit <https://www.rd.usda.gov/wi>.

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