

Dept. of Agriculture: Invests \$266 million to help rural business owners, farmers and ranchers lower energy costs, generate income and expand operations, as part of investing in America Agenda

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 30, 2023 – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that [USDA is awarding \\$266 million in loans and grants to agriculture producers and rural small businesses](#) to make investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency improvements that will lower their energy costs, generate new income, and strengthen the resilience of their operation. This funding is made possible in part by President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act, the nation's largest-ever investment in combatting the climate crisis.

USDA is investing \$266 million in 1,334 renewable energy and energy-efficiency projects in 47 states, Guam and Puerto Rico. The Department is awarding the loans and grants through the [Rural Energy for America Program](#) (REAP), including funding from the landmark Inflation Reduction Act.

In Wisconsin:

- Anu Sky Farm in Stoughton will use a \$13,591 grant to help install a small solar-electric array. The project annually is expected to save \$1,541 and replace 13,757 kWh (100 percent), enough energy to power one home.

“The Rural Energy for American Program is a great program utilized by agricultural producers and rural small businesses investing in renewable or energy efficient projects,” said Wisconsin State Director Julie Lassa. “This grant is particularly exciting as it will be used to help install a small solar array on a woman-owned and operated farm.” [[Audio: Mp3, 20 seconds, 481KB](#)]

Since December 2022, USDA has made up to \$1.3 billion available in REAP funding through the Inflation Reduction Act. Eligible applicants include rural small business owners and agricultural producers. The program is part of the Justice40 Initiative, which is working to ensure that 40 percent of the benefits of certain federal investments reach communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution and underinvestment.

USDA is making awards in Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Iowa, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, Montana, North Carolina, North Dakota, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, Nevada, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin, West Virginia, Wyoming, Guam and Puerto Rico.

The Department expects to make additional awards in the coming months.

USDA continues to accept applications and will hold funding competitions quarterly through Sept. 30, 2024. The funding includes \$144.5 million for underutilized renewable energy technologies. For additional information on application deadlines and submission details, see page 19239 of the March 31 [Federal Register](#).

Background: Inflation Reduction Act

As a core pillar of Bidenomics and the President’s Investing in America agenda, the [Inflation Reduction Act](#) makes the largest investment in climate action in history and is lowering energy costs, bringing opportunity to communities across America and tackling the climate crisis through investments in agriculture, forest restoration, and rural communities.

The Biden-Harris Administration championed the Inflation Reduction Act to help provide new funding and unprecedented incentives to expand clean energy, transform rural power production, create jobs and spur economic growth. It is the

largest single investment in rural electrification since the Rural Electrification Act of 1936.

Through the Inflation Reduction Act, the Administration is delivering on its promise to fight climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions across America.

It provides funding to USDA Rural Development to help eligible organizations invest in renewable energy infrastructure and zero-emission systems and make energy-efficiency improvements that will significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

It will boost the long-term resiliency, reliability, and affordability of rural electric systems. It will help families save money on utility bills, and it will expand rural opportunities in the clean-energy economy.

For more information on the Inflation Reduction Act, visit: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/inflation-reduction-act>.

To learn more about investment resources for rural areas, visit www.rd.usda.gov or contact the nearest [USDA Rural Development state office](#).

USDA 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 www.rd.usda.gov.

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