

U.S. Dept. of Agriculture: 200 USDA-funded projects create economic opportunity in underserved rural and Native American communities

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STEVENS POINT, Wisc., Dec. 13, 2023 – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development State Director for Wisconsin Julie Lassa announced four projects to improve infrastructure, housing, and economic conditions for underserved rural and Native American communities.

“People everywhere, regardless of where they live, deserve access to quality housing, good schools and the opportunity to succeed,” said Lassa. “President Biden and the USDA are making record investments in our rural communities to ensure everyone has a path to success. These four investments will make a positive difference in the lives of students and families in rural parts of Wisconsin.” [[Audio: Mp3, 20 seconds, 479 Kb](#)]

USDA is making investments in several programs specifically designed to bring federal funding and resources to people and communities in underserved rural areas. [More than 200 projects announced this week](#) by USDA Deputy Secretary Farah Ahmad in California will benefit hundreds of thousands of people in 42 states, Puerto Rico and the Marshall Islands.

In Wisconsin:

- **Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe University** will use a \$352,000 [Tribal College Initiative Grant](#) to renovate the business office space for Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe University. Improvements to the workflow of office space will include

new commercial-grade doors to ensure the security of the personnel and staff. Additionally, if funding allows, the university will use grant funds to remove and replace worn carpet and vinyl flooring with commercial-grade materials in the office areas.

- **Community Development Alternatives, Inc.**, will use a \$105,000 [Housing Preservation Grant](#) towards the repair or rehabilitation of 12 very low-income households and two low-income households in Crawford and Grant Counties.
- **Couleecap Inc.**, will use a \$80,500 [Housing Preservation Grant](#) to repair or rehabilitate seven homes at or below the county median income in rural eligible areas of Crawford, Monroe, La Crosse, and Vernon Counties.
- **Red Cliff Chippewa Housing Authority** will use a \$50,000 [Housing Preservation Grant](#) to rehabilitate four homes for low and very-low-income tribal members.

The investments are part of President Biden's [commitment to advance equity for all](#), including those who have been historically underserved, marginalized and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality.

New Web Resources for Rural Communities

USDA Rural Development today also unveiled two new web resources that underscore the agency's mission to ensure all people have equitable access to federal programs.

A new [history webpage](#) traces USDA Rural Development's evolution from the Great Depression and New Deal to the present, highlighting the many ways the agency supports efforts to create prosperity in rural communities.

One of the agency's more recent initiatives, the [Rural Partners Network](#) (RPN), has brought together a coalition of 24 federal agencies that offer programs and funding designed specifically for rural communities.

A new feature on [Rural.gov](#) makes it easier to find these federal resources in one place. The [Find Programs and Opportunities](#) tool includes hundreds of millions of dollars in financing and technical assistance opportunities that are easy to search, filter and find.

The information will help people in rural areas access funding for a variety of business, health care, housing, community, and economic development needs.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the leadership of the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate-smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.

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