

U.S. Dept. of Agriculture: Helps expand access to rural health care through investing in America agenda

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RHINELANDER, Wis., July 25, 2023 – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development Farah Ahmad today announced that USDA is expanding access to health care for more than 11,000 people living in Wisconsin as part of President Biden's *Investing in America* agenda.

“The Biden-Harris Administration responded with immediate economic relief to ensure people could access high-quality, reliable health care services during one of the most critical times in our nation’s history,” Ahmad said. “Like President Biden, USDA knows that a strong community is rooted in the health, well-being and promise of its people, and the Emergency Rural Health Care Grants program has strengthened rural America’s health care infrastructure and expanded access to critical care in Wisconsin and across the nation.”

USDA is awarding \$2 million in [Emergency Rural Health Care Grants](#) to improve health care facilities in Wisconsin. These grants will help two rural health care organizations expand critical services.

Today’s investments will help regional partnerships, public bodies, nonprofits, and Tribes solve regional rural health care challenges. These solutions will build a stronger, more sustainable rural health care system for the nation’s small towns and communities.

In Wisconsin:

- **Upland Hills Health, Inc.**, will use a \$1 million Emergency Rural Health Care

Grant to replace the Mineral Point clinic which is housed in a building built in 1880. This project will include the construction of a new clinic building which will create an up to date and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant facility. In addition, the clinic will include a drive thru pharmacy to increase the ability to socially distance and will provide additional clinic space for patient access to health care professionals. New equipment at the facility will be up to date and allow the clinic to provide additional and timely medical services to the community as well as provide additional testing for COVID-19 and vaccination distribution.

- **Reedsburg Area Medical Center, Inc.**, will use a \$1 million Emergency Rural Health Care Grant to equip a new clinic building with new equipment, and allow the clinic to provide additional and timely medical services to the community. Funds will also provide additional testing for COVID-19, new telehealth services, behavioral health services with increased need due to the pandemic, and retail pharmacy housing COVID testing and vaccination equipment.

“These grants are making a direct and positive contribution to the health and quality of life of people living and working in rural communities,” said USDA Rural Development Wisconsin State Director Julie Lassa. “Not only do these investments mean that rural residents won’t have to drive as far and take as much time off of work to travel to get necessary medical care; it also means that we are modernizing critical health care facilities that are important economic drivers and employers in many of our rural areas.”

The [investments](#) announced today will also expand health care services in Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming and Puerto Rico.

Background: Emergency Rural Health Care Grants

Congress passed the American Rescue Plan Act in March 2021 to deliver immediate economic relief to people impacted by the pandemic. Within months after the Act’s passage, USDA responded quickly by making this funding available to ensure the long-term availability of rural health care services.

In August 2021, USDA made the [Emergency Rural Health Care Grants](#) available through the American Rescue Plan Act to help rural health care facilities, tribes and communities expand access to health care services and nutrition assistance.

The assistance is helping provide immediate relief to support rural hospitals, health care clinics and local communities. USDA is administering the funds through Rural Development's [Community Facilities Program](#).

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/wi. If you'd like to subscribe to USDA Rural Development updates, visit the [GovDelivery subscriber page](#).

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under 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.