Program Objective

The overall mission of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development is to improve the quality of life for rural Americans. To accomplish this, we work diligently to coordinate Federal assistance in rural areas of Montana. By partnering with both for-profit and non-profit sectors as well as state, tribal, and local governments, we are fundamentally changing the way we do business. With this new philosophy of public partnership, many positive outcomes for rural Americans are occurring daily.

It is Rural Development’s intention to ensure rural citizens can participate fully in the global economy. By providing technical assistance and programs to rural Americans, we are helping to build a stronger economy, preserve our rural heritage, and improve the quality of life for all. More Montanans have homes, jobs, and needed infrastructure thanks to USDA Rural Development programs.

Business Programs provides loans, loan guarantees, and grants to help small businesses and agricultural producers build their businesses.

Renewable Energy for America Program

REAP provides loan guarantees and grants, or combinations of the two. Grants for feasibility studies are a new feature this year, with application instructions and ranking criteria explained in the Notice of Solicitation of Applications (NOSA). Maximum awards as follows:

- Renewable Energy Systems Grants - $500,000 or 25% of eligible project costs, whichever is less;
- Energy Efficiency Grants - $250,000 or 25% of eligible project costs, whichever is less;
- Loan Guarantees - $25 Million or 75% of eligible project costs, whichever is less;
- Feasibility Studies - $50,000 or 25% of eligible study costs, whichever is less

Rural Business Enterprise Grants

Grants are used to provide short-term cash infusions to spur business development in economically challenged rural areas.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provided additional funds for Rural Development’s RBEG program.

Guaranteed Loans

The Guaranteed Loan program provides up to a 90% guarantee on traditional business lender loans to assist small businesses receive advantageous fixed loan rates and access the secondary loan market. Businesses must be located in a designated rural area and applicants must meet additional requirements.