



RURAL OPPORTUNITY ZONE RESOURCES

When President Trump signed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, he created the more 8,700 Opportunity Zones in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and 5 Territories. **Forty percent of Opportunity Zones are in rural America** and were chosen to incentivize long-term investments in low-income communities nationwide. This unique tax incentive is creating family sustaining jobs and enhancing communities through private capital investment. **To amplify the impact Opportunity Zones, the White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council has taken over 300 actions** to target, coordinate, and streamline Federal resources across 17 agencies to Opportunity Zones. Below are a list of resources and programs that are uniquely targeted to rural Opportunity Zones for Economic Development, Workforce and Education, and Entrepreneurship. Additional resources and links are provided at the end for rural leaders to access Opportunity Zone Best Practices and strategies to leverage Federal resources.

Rural Opportunity Zone Targeted Programs

Programs are hyperlinked to their respective agency's website

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

- New Markets Tax Credit Program (NMTC) – Community Development Financial Institutions Fund, Department of the Treasury

The New Markets Tax Credit Program (NMTC Program) aims to break a cycle of disinvestment by attracting the private investment necessary to reinvigorate struggling local economies. The NMTC Program attracts private capital into low-income communities by permitting individual and corporate investors to receive a tax credit against their federal income tax in exchange for making equity investments in specialized financial intermediaries called Community Development Entities (CDEs). The NMTC Program is authorized through calendar year 2020.

- Disaster Relief Act 2019 Grant Funds for Community Facilities Technical Assistance and Training Grant – Rural Housing Service, Department of Agriculture

The Rural Housing Service's Community Facilities (CF) Technical Assistance and Training (TAT) Grant Program provides supplemental grant funding for eligible expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Michael and Florence and wildfires occurring in calendar year 2018, tornadoes and floods occurring in calendar year 2019, and other natural disasters.

- Rural Business Development Grant Program to Provide Technical Assistance for Rural Transportation Systems – Rural Development, Department of Agriculture

The purpose of this program is to improve the economic conditions of Rural Areas. For the funding for Technical Assistance for Rural Transportation systems, applicants must be qualified national organizations with experience in providing Technical Assistance and

training to rural communities nationwide for the purpose of improving passenger transportation services or facilities.

➤ Section 533 Housing Preservation Grants (HPG) – Department of Agriculture

These grants are for qualified public agencies, private non-profit organizations including, but not limited to, Faith-Based and neighborhood partnerships, and other eligible entities, to assist low- and very low-income homeowners in repairing and rehabilitating their homes in rural areas. In addition, the HPG program assists cooperative housing complexes and rental property owners in rural areas in repairing and rehabilitating their units if they agree to make such units available to very low- and low-income persons.

➤ ReConnect Pilot Program – Department of Agriculture

The ReConnect Program provides loans, grants, and loan/grant combinations to facilitate broadband deployment in rural areas. In facilitating the expansion of broadband services and infrastructure, the pilot will fuel long-term rural economic development and opportunities in rural America. One of those opportunities is precision agriculture. The use of this technology requires a robust broadband connection. The awards made under this program will bring high speed broadband to the farms which will allow them to increase productivity.

➤ Disaster Relief Act 2019 Grant Funds for Community Facilities – Rural Housing Service, Department of Agriculture

As part of the Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act, 2019, the Rural Housing Service's Community Facilities Program (CF) received supplemental grant funding available for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Michael and Florence and wildfires occurring in calendar year 2018, tornadoes and floods occurring in calendar year 2019, and other natural disasters, to remain available until expended. The authority for the Agency to administer the Community Facilities Grant Program is provided in the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (CONAct). The grant funds will be administered in accordance with this notice of funds availability.

➤ Rural Housing Preservation Grant – Rural Development, Department of Agriculture

The HPG program is a grant program which provides qualified public agencies, private nonprofit organizations, which may include but not be limited to, Faith-Based and Community Organizations, and other eligible entities grant funds to assist very low- and low-income homeowners in repairing and rehabilitating their homes in rural areas. In addition, the HPG program assists rental property owners and cooperative housing complexes in repairing and rehabilitating their units if they agree to make such units available to low- and very low-income persons.

➤ Section 514 Farm Labor Housing Loans for Off-Farm Housing – Rural Development Housing and Community Facilities, Department of Agriculture

These loans are for the construction of new off-farm FLH units and related facilities for domestic farm laborers and for the purchase and substantial rehabilitation of non-FLH

property. The intended purpose of the loans is to increase the number of available housing units for domestic farm laborers.

➤ *Section 516 Farm Labor Housing Grants for Off-Farm Housing - Rural Development Housing and Community Facilities, Department of Agriculture*

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➤ *Technical Assistance and Training for Rural Water Systems – Rural Development, Department of Agriculture*

This program helps qualified, private nonprofits provide technical assistance and training to identify and evaluate solutions to water and waste problems; helps applicants prepare applications for water and waste disposal loans/ grants; and helps associations improve the operation and maintenance of water and waste facilities in eligible rural areas.

➤ *Rural Capacity Building for Community Development & Affordable Housing Grants – Office of Community Planning & Development, Department of Housing & Urban Development*

The is an annual competitive program that enhances the capacity and ability of rural housing development organizations, Community Development Corporations (CDCs), Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs), local governments, and Indian tribes (eligible beneficiaries) to carry out affordable housing and community development activities in rural areas for the benefit of low- and moderate-income families and persons.

➤ *Technical Assistance – Office of Policy Development & Research and Office of Community Planning and Development, Department of Housing & Urban Development*

HUD technical assistance is designed to provide resources, tools, and support for recipients of HUD funding, including units of general local governments, public housing authorities, tribes and tribally-designated housing entities, and nonprofit partners in rural areas. HUD's technical assistance resources include online resources, training and in-depth program assistance and capacity building support.

The Technical Assistance program is designed to improve the fiscal health and build the administrative capacity of relatively small units of general local government, including those in rural areas, that are economically distressed and/or have been recently impacted by a natural disaster. In addition to improving financial performance and financial management practices, other possible areas of TA under this program include economic stabilization and recovery, disaster recovery planning, federal development programs such as Opportunity Zones, affordable housing financing, community engagement practices, cross-sector partnerships, and plan implementation. This program also helps improve knowledge of federal development programs, including indirect subsidy sources such as Opportunity Zones and the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program. This program allows HUD to develop a set of best practices and recommendations to share with other communities facing similar challenges.

➤ *Indian Community Development Block Grant* – *Office of Native American Programs, Department of Housing and Urban Development*

This is an annual competitive program that provides eligible Tribal grantees with direct grants for use in developing viable Indian and Alaska Native Communities, including decent housing, a suitable living environment, and economic opportunities, primarily for low- and moderate- income persons. These grants are designed to support housing rehabilitation, land acquisition to support new housing construction, infrastructure, including roads, water and sewer facilities and single or multi-purpose community facilities, as well as economic development focused on commercial, industrial or agriculture projects, to name a few.

➤ *Indian Housing Block Grant Competitive* – *Office of Native American Programs, Department of Housing and Urban Development*

This is a competitive program that provides eligible Tribal grantees with direct grants to carry out a wide range of affordable housing activities. Indian tribes and TDHEs that are applying for funding to carry out new housing construction and rehabilitation receive a priority. Proposed projects that will be carried out in Opportunity Zones receive additional points under the competition.

➤ *States' Economic Development Assistance Program (SEDAP)* – *Economic Development Assistance Program, Delta Regional Authority*

SEDAP makes strategic investments into economic and community development projects across the Mississippi River Delta and Alabama Black Belt regions. Seventy-five percent of these funds are invested in economically distressed counties/parishes and fifty percent of these funds are invested into basic public infrastructure and transportation improvements with the remaining being directed to workforce development and business development/entrepreneurship

➤ *Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF)* – *Economic Development Assistance Program, Delta Regional Authority*

CIF makes strategic investments into economic and community development projects across the Mississippi River Delta and Alabama Black Belt region. Seventy-five percent of these funds are invested in economically distressed counties/parishes and fifty percent of these funds are invested into basic public infrastructure, transportation infrastructure, and flood control projects.

➤ *National Tribal Broadband Grant (NTBG)* – *Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior*

The National Tribal Broadband Grant provides funding for Tribes to hire consultants to perform feasibility studies for high-speed internet deployment or expansion in Tribal communities. Funding may be used for: Assessment of current broadband services, if any, that are available to an applicant's community.; Engineering assessment of new or expanded broadband services; Estimate of expanded broadband services; Estimate of the cost of building or expanding a broadband network; Determination of transmission

medium(s) that will be employed; Identification of potential funding and/or financing for the network; and Consideration of financial and practical risks associated with developing a broadband network.

➤ *Solid Waste Management Grants – Rural Development, Department of Agriculture*

These grants are designed to help reduce and/or eliminate pollution of water resources by providing funding for organizations that provide technical assistance or training to improve the planning and management of solid waste sites. These grants are designed to assist most state and local governmental entities, nonprofit organizations, federally recognized tribes, and academic institutions throughout the United States.

➤ *National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) – Employment and Training Administration, Department of Labor*

These grants provide career services, training services, youth services, related assistance services, and housing assistance to eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their dependents. Through the provision of these services, grantees will work toward the goals of NFJP: to help farmworkers and their dependents acquire necessary skills to either stabilize or advance in their agricultural jobs or obtain employment in new industries or occupations.

➤ *State Economic & Infrastructure Development Program (SEID) – Northern Border Regional Commission*

SEID focuses economic and community development investments in primarily rural communities throughout portions of New York, New Hampshire, Maine, and the entire state of Vermont. A minimum of forty percent of SEID funds are invested in infrastructure projects annually, with the remainder supporting a diverse spectrum of projects, to include business support, energy, telecommunications, and workforce development. SEID funds often catalyze projects that ultimately attract additional private and public funds.

➤ *Community Economic Development (CED) – Office of Community Services, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services*

The CED program provides grant awards on a competitive basis to private non-profit community development corporations that design projects which address the economic needs of low-income individuals and families through the creation of sustainable business development and employment opportunities. Priority bonus points are granted to applicants from rural areas with high rates of poverty, unemployment, substance abuse use disorder, and areas designated as Opportunity Zones.

➤ *Service Area Competition – Health Center Program, Health Resources and Services Administration, Department of Health & Human Services*

Health centers funded through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Health Center Program deliver affordable, accessible, quality, and cost-effective primary health care to patients regardless of their ability to pay. Health centers are an essential primary care provider for millions of people across the country and advance a model of

coordinated, comprehensive, and patient-centered primary health care, integrating a wide range of medical, dental, mental health, substance use disorder, and patient services.

➤ Community Revitalization Technical Assistance – *Environmental Protection Agency*

EPA's Office of Community Revitalization (OCR) provides technical assistance and capacity to communities, helping them create locally led, community driven plans that include catalytic public investments that leverage private sector investments. The assistance helps rural and distressed communities identify and nurture economic drivers such as local and regional food systems, the health care economy, broadband investments, and the growing recreation economy in ways that lead to the revitalization of the Main Street economy, the reuse of vacant properties and buildings, and development that takes advantage of existing infrastructure. OCR and Regional partners also use geospatial analysis to understand environmental challenges in rural and distressed communities. Additionally, for rural communities with Opportunity Zones, OCR created a Community Prospectus Development Tool, and a Development Finance Toolbox with strategies for incentivizing and attracting Opportunity Zone investment.

➤ Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup Grants and Technical Assistance – *Environmental Protection Agency*

This program provides competitive grants to help communities assess and cleanup brownfield sites, competitive grants to support environmental workforce development and job training, and noncompetitive grants to establish and enhance states and tribal response programs. The program also provides technical assistance to support brownfield communities, including targeted brownfields assessments and access to brownfields technical assistance providers.

➤ Environmental Justice Grants – *Environmental Protection Agency*

EPA's Office of Environmental Justice provides a range of different grant opportunities. The Environmental Justice Small Grants and the Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem Solving cooperative agreements both provide support directly to local community based organizations, indigenous organizations, and tribal governments to identify and address environmental justice issues in their local communities. Grant projects can focus on an array of different environmental issues such as water quality, flooding, air quality, monitoring, environmental education, etc. The State Environmental Justice Cooperative Agreements program provides support to state, tribal, local, and territorial governments to work with directly with communities with environmental justice concerns to identify and address environmental justice issues while furthering the development of government environmental justice programs. All three of these funding programs are regularly awarded to projects that benefit rural communities.

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:

➤ Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grants – *Rural Development, Department of Agriculture*

This program provides financial assistance to enable and improve distance learning and telemedicine services in rural areas. The grant funds support the use of telecommunications-enabled information, audio and video equipment, and related advanced technologies by students, teachers, medical professionals and rural residents. The grants are intended to increase rural access to education, training, and health care resources that are otherwise unavailable or limited in scope.

➤ *Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities (WORC): A Grant Initiative for the Appalachian and Delta Regions* – ***Employment and Training Administration, Department of Labor***

These grants will enable eligible applicants within the Appalachian and Delta regions to expand the impact of existing workforce development initiatives, as well as provide valuable career, training, and support services to eligible individuals in counties and parishes and/or areas currently underserved by other resources. These grants support workforce development activities that prepare dislocated workers, new entrants to the workforce, and incumbent workers for good jobs in high-demand occupations aligned with a regional or community economic development strategy.

➤ *Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP)* – ***Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Education***

Part B of Title V of the reauthorized ESEA contains Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP) initiatives that are designed to help rural districts that may lack the personnel and resources to compete effectively for Federal competitive grants and that often receive grant allocations in amounts that are too small to be effective in meeting their intended purposes.

➤ *Career and Technical Education (CTE) Innovation and Modernization Grant Program* – ***Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, Department of Education***

Each year under the Perkins V statute, Congress authorizes roughly \$1.4 million annually for the Innovation and Modernization Program (Perkins I&M) to support grants to eligible entities, eligible institutions, and eligible recipients. The purpose of the Perkins I&M is to identify, support, and rigorously evaluate evidence-based and innovative strategies and activities to improve and modernize career and technical education (CTE) and ensure workforce skills taught in CTE programs funded under the Perkins statute align with labor market needs.

➤ *Delta Workforce Grant Program* – ***Delta Regional Authority***

The Delta Workforce Grant Program (DWP) targets federal resources towards communities in the Mississippi River Delta and Alabama Black Belt regions particularly hard hit by industrial downsizing, business closures, and job losses as a result of the public health and economic crisis. DWP supports projects and initiatives that create a more vibrant economic future for the Delta region by expanding job training and re-employment opportunities, aligning workforce and economic development strategies, creating sustainable talent pipelines, establishing or enhancing locally/regionally significant public-private partnerships, and supporting enhanced workforce productivity through investments in innovative programming. Applicants will receive additional points if they can demonstrate their project occurs in or impacts a federally-designated Opportunity Zone. View the 2020

Request for Proposals and visit www.workforce.dra.gov to submit an application by October 12, 2020.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP:

➤ **Rural Business Development Grants – *Rural Development, Department of Agriculture***

This is a competitive grant designed to support targeted technical assistance, training and other activities leading to the development or expansion of small and emerging private businesses in rural areas that match median household income criteria. Priorities are given according to trauma, economic distress, long-term poverty, population decline, and unemployment.

➤ **7(a) Loan Program – *Small Business Administration***

SBA's flagship loan program provides small businesses with access to capital to finance a wide variety of business activities, including purchasing machinery, furniture, fixtures, supplies and materials, improvements to land and buildings, and working capital.

➤ **Program for Investors in Micro-Entrepreneurs (PRIME) – *Small Business Administration***

The SBA's Program for Investment in Micro-Entrepreneurs (PRIME) provides grants to organizations that help low-income entrepreneurs who lack sufficient training and education to gain access to capital to establish and expand their small businesses. SBA expects to make approximately 25 awards for a total of \$5 million.

➤ **Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) – *Appalachian Regional Commission***

POWER (Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization) is a congressionally funded initiative that targets federal resources to help communities and regions that have been affected by job losses in coal mining, coal power plant operations, and coal-related supply chain industries due to the changing economics of America's energy production. The POWER Initiative supports efforts to create a more vibrant economic future for coal-impacted communities by cultivating economic diversity, enhancing job training and re-employment opportunities, creating jobs in existing or new industries, and attracting new sources of investment.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

For more information about Opportunity Zones, their successes, and how to access more of these programs and grants, please visit: www.opportunityzones.gov

Community Opportunity Zone Toolkits - (Volume 1, Volume 2)

Provides a roadmap to help communities plan for potential investments in Opportunity Zones by understanding local needs, aligning community assets, establishing regulatory tools and financing

incentives to support investments and forming partnerships toward equitable and inclusive community development.

WHORC Best Practices Report - (*Report*)

Highlights actions being taken by state governments, local governments, Qualified Opportunity Funds, public-private partnerships, and others to spur revitalizing investments in the areas of most need.

Interested in your State's or Territory's Opportunity Zone Strategy? - (*Report*)

Scroll to the bottom of the page and select you state or territory to find out more information.

Request Program Assistance - (Technical Assistance)

HUD's Community Compass Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Program offers direct technical assistance support to HUD's customers, including support to customers in rural areas and support related to Opportunity Zones. Prior to submitting a request, please review available guidance and training and consult with your local HUD Field Office for assistance.

Opportunity Zones 101 for Tribes - (*Webinar*)

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