



# OFFICE OF CONGRESSMAN CARLOS GIMENEZ (FL-26)

## **Community Project Funding (CPF): FY23 Agriculture**

Return completed form and required documentation to: [jacqueline.olvera@mail.house.gov](mailto:jacqueline.olvera@mail.house.gov)

Due Date: April 15, 2022

*Note: Only non-profit entities, public institutions, and state and local government entities are eligible to request projects. Projects cannot be designated for private individuals or for-profit entities. The Subcommittee will only accept legally eligible requests under the following accounts: Agricultural Research Service, Buildings and Facilities; Rural Development, Rural Community Facility Grants; Rural Utilities Service, ReConnect Grants; Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, Conservation Operations.*

Entity Requesting Funds (aka non-federal project sponsor):

Primary Point of Contact (name, email, phone number, organization address):

Project Priority (if non-federal sponsor is submitting more than 1 project):

Short description of the project to appear in the report:

Total Project Cost (including breakdown of federal/non-federal shares):

Requested Amount:

Sources of funding for the full share of the cost of the project if amount received is less than amount requested:

Whether the project has received Federal funding previously, and if so, the source and amount:

Complete Description of Project (limit 1000 characters, including spaces):

The website address of the proposed recipient:

If there are additional costs necessary to complete the project, have those been secured?

For rural development projects, is the project for an eligible purpose and does it meet all eligibility requirements under current law (Explain how it meets those requirements)?

Does the entity plan to make grants to other entities from the funds provided and if so, to which entities?

Why is the project a priority for the district? Briefly explain the community benefits.

Has any funding for the project been included in any presidential budget and if so, how much, in which fiscal year, and in which agency or agencies and program(s)?

Has the project received federal funding before and if so, how much, when, and from which agency or agencies and program(s)?

For ARS B&F only, what is the estimated start date of the project? How soon could the feasibility/engineering design phase commence? [mm/yy]

For ARS B&F only, does the project have distinct and separable phases?

For ARS B&F only, what is the estimated completion date of the project? When does completion of construction occur? [mm/yy]

For ReConnect requests only, please provide relevant information, such as the number of households, businesses, or farms that would be served, what the performance of the service to be offered will be, and whether healthcare or educational facilities will be served.

For Conservation Operations, briefly describe how the project will reduce soil erosion, enhance water supplies, improve water quality, increase wildlife habitat, or other objectives that will help conserve, maintain, and improve natural resources

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Additional guidance on Community Project Funding requests for eligible accounts:

**Department of Agriculture Community Facilities Grants**

Grants to purchase, construct, or improve essential community facilities, to purchase equipment, and pay other related project expenses. Essential community facilities include, but are not limited to, healthcare facilities, public facilities, public safety measures, educational services, or other community support services. Examples of eligible projects include medical or dental clinics, towns halls, courthouses, childcare centers, police or fire departments, public works vehicles, or distance learning equipment. Any project must serve a rural area as specified in 7 CFR 3570.53 (rural areas including cities, villages, townships and Federally Recognized Tribal lands with no more than 20,000 residents), and the Member's request must demonstrate community support. Members should ensure that their request provides the fullest description of the project as possible. Submissions should include details on all proposed uses of funds, activities that will occur, timeline, and detailed information on the complete service territory, including median household income of the proposed project.

Please review all program regulations carefully, most notably:

- Cost share requirements. The Community Facilities program has a cost share calculated on a graduated scale. The applicant should be aware of any cost share as documented in 7 CFR 3570.63(b).
- Credit Elsewhere Test. Applicant shall certify they cannot finance the project from their own resources and credit is not otherwise available on reasonable terms from non-Federal sources.

Community Facilities grants generally cannot be used to pay initial operating expenses or annual recurring expenses, refinance existing debt, pay interest, build or repair facilities in non-rural areas, or pay for construction costs of facilities that will be used for commercial rental space.

The State Rural Development Office is a valuable resource to answer program questions, including eligibility.

For fiscal year 2022, the average CPF funding level was just over \$1 million. Please note that the Committee will consider higher project requests for fiscal year 2023. However, projects requesting significantly more than that average may be more difficult to fund and funding will depend on program demand and other variables. Any future potential project caps will be determined by the Chair after reviewing the full universe of requests.

### **Department of Agriculture ReConnect Program**

ReConnect broadband pilot grants facilitate broadband deployment in rural areas. Grants funds can be used for the costs of construction, improvement, or acquisition of facilities and equipment needed to provide broadband service to rural areas without sufficient broadband access.

The area must be rural and lack sufficient access to broadband service. A rural area is any area which is not located within a city, town, or incorporated area that has a population of greater than 20,000 inhabitants. Sufficient access to broadband is defined as greater than 90% of any rural area in which households have fixed, terrestrial broadband service delivering at least 25 Mbps downstream and 3 Mbps upstream. Mobile and satellite services will not be considered in making the determination of sufficient access to broadband.

Stand-alone middle-mile projects are not eligible under the ReConnect Program. However, middle-mile facilities are eligible if they are needed to bring sufficient broadband service to all premises in the area.

Members are strongly encouraged to include information in their requests, such as the number of households, businesses, or farms will be served in the area, what the performance of the service to be offered will be, and whether healthcare or educational facilities will be served.

USDA's Rural Development is a valuable resource to answer program questions, including eligibility. For fiscal year 2022, the average ReConnect CPF award was nearly \$2 million. Please note the subcommittee will consider higher project requests for fiscal year 2023. However, projects requesting significantly more than that average may be more difficult to fund and funding will depend on program demand and other variables. Any future potential project caps will be determined by the Chair after reviewing the full universe of requests.

Additionally, when submitting a request, Members are reminded that all policies and procedures apply, including environmental and related reviews and the cost share requirement of 25% of the overall project cost. Policies and procedures can be found at <https://go.usa.gov/xexPT>.

### **Department of Agriculture Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grants**

The Distance Learning and Telemedicine program (DLT) helps rural residents better utilize the enormous potential of modern telecommunications and the internet for education and healthcare, two critical components of economic and community development. The DLT program helps rural communities acquire the technology and training necessary to connect educational and medical professionals with students, teachers, and patients in rural areas.

Grants may be used for audio and video equipment, broadband facilities that support distance learning or telemedicine (not actual broadband), computer hardware or network components/software, and acquisition of instructional programming.

All requests are subject to all the regulations governing the program which can be found at 7 CFR Part 1734. The program requires a 15% match that cannot come from another federal source.

The State Rural Development Office is a valuable resource to answer program questions, including eligibility.

Competitive awards typically range from \$50,000 to \$1,000,000 and the Committee will consider projects in this range. This a new account for the fiscal 2023 House process; in fiscal year 2022, the average Senate CPF in this account was \$359,000. Members are strongly encouraged to provide as much detail as possible on how the award will be utilized, what equipment of service will be acquired and any information on population(s) served. The program is intended to serve rural areas with populations of 20,000 or less.

### **Department of Agriculture Agricultural Research Service, Buildings and Facilities**

The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) owns and operates laboratories and facilities across the United States. Many of these laboratories/facilities are decades old, have outlived their functional lifespan, and are badly in need of major repairs, renovation, or replacement. Facility requests must be for ARS-owned facilities or for facilities that will enhance ongoing ARS work. Requests can assist in the acquisition of land, construction, repair, improvement, extension, alteration, and purchase of fixed equipment or facilities as necessary to carry out the agricultural research programs of the Department of Agriculture. Members are strongly encouraged to provide details on the research to be conducted, why the research is a high priority, as well as details on the modernization and why it is critical in carrying out the research. Requests for ARS-owned facilities will be given priority for funding.

### **Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, Conservation Operations**

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) supports private landowners, conservation districts, and other organizations to conserve, maintain, and improve the Nation's natural resources. Conservation Operations has four major program components: Conservation Technical Assistance, Soil Survey, Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasting, and Plant Materials Centers. Examples of specific objectives include reduce soil erosion, improve soil health, enhance water supplies, improve water quality, increase wildlife habitat, and reduce damage caused by floods and other natural disasters. Due to the newness of the urban agriculture program, the subcommittee will not consider such proposals this year as part of CPFs in Conservation Operations.

Members are strongly encouraged to provide details on the work to be done, including if the project will conduct surveys, investigations, or research, and if there is a plan to publish the results of any such work. Members should also describe any preventive measures to be taken, such as engineering operations, methods of cultivation, or changes in use of land.

This is a new account for the fiscal year 2023 House process; in fiscal year 2022, the average Senate CPF in this account was \$1.1 million. The Committee will consider higher project requests for fiscal year 2023. However, projects requesting significantly more than that average may be more difficult to accommodate and will depend on program demand and other variables. Any future potential project caps will be determined by the Chair after reviewing the full universe of requests.