



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture - Rural Development
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USDA Invites Vermont Rural Small Businesses and Agricultural Producers to Apply for the Rural Energy for America Program

Important Funding Application Deadlines.

Montpelier, VT, May 3, 2010 —

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that USDA is seeking applications from farmers, agricultural producers and owners of rural small businesses to purchase renewable energy systems and make energy efficiency improvements. The funding is provided through USDA Rural Development's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), authorized by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Farm Bill).

The funding notice dated April 26, 2010 notes the deadline of June 30, 2010 for nation-wide applications, however, states have also been given funding for in-state competition. Applicants wishing to be considered for the in-state funding must submit applications no later than close of business (4:30 P.M.), Friday, May 21, 2010. A second round of applications will be accepted for in-state funding and must be received by 4:30 P.M., Friday, June 4, 2010.

All applications received after Friday, June 4, 2010, will be submitted for national competition. These applications must be received in the Montpelier Area Office, not later than close of business (4:30 P.M.), Wednesday, June 30, 2010. Applications received after this date and time will not be considered for funding in FY 2010, regardless of the postmark on the application.

More information on how to apply for funding is available in the April 26, 2010 *Federal Register*: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/2010-9580.pdf>.

Eligible projects include installing renewable energy systems such as wind turbines, solar, geothermal, biomass, anaerobic digesters, hydroelectric, and ocean, or hydrogen systems. Funding may also be used to purchase energy-efficient equipment, adding insulation, and improving heating and cooling systems. In fiscal year 2009, this program helped fund 1,485 REAP projects in 50 states, the territory of Puerto Rico and the Western Pacific Islands.

For more information about USDA Rural Development's Rural Energy for America Program in Vermont contact Cheryl Ducharme, Rural Energy Coordinator, at 802-828-6083 or visit <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/vt>.

Under REAP, grants are also available to intermediaries to help owners of rural businesses and farms to conduct energy audits. Eligible applicants include a unit of State, tribal, or local government; institutions of higher education; rural electric cooperatives; or a public power entity. The program is designed to provide energy audit assistance to farmers, ranchers, and rural small businesses. USDA Rural Development has entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which is implementing an energy audit program for farms, to minimize duplication of services by sharing information about funding recipients. The NRCS initiative (the Environmental Quality Incentives Program - EQIP) will provide approximately 1,000 on-farm energy audit evaluations in selected states. Information about EQIP is available by visiting the following website:

www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/EQIP_signup/2009_signup/index.html

USDA, through its Rural Development mission area, administers and manages more than 40 housing, business and community infrastructure and facility programs through a network of 6,100 employees located in 500 national, state and local offices. These programs are designed to improve the economic stability of rural communities, businesses, residents, farmers and ranchers and improve the quality of life in rural America. Rural Development has an existing portfolio of more than \$134 billion in loans and loan guarantees. To learn more about USDA Rural Development programs visit the web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/vt>.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).