

application and the eligibility of each applicant on the information provided in the application.

Selection Criteria

Section 514 loan funds and section 516 grant funds will be distributed to States based on a national competition, as follows:

(1) States will accept, review, and score requests in accordance with the Notice. The scoring factors are:

(a) The presence and extent of leveraged assistance, including donated land, for the units that will serve program-eligible tenants, calculated as a percentage of the RHS total development cost (TDC). RHS TDC excludes non-RHS eligible costs such as a developer's fee. Leveraged assistance includes, but is not limited to, funds for hard construction costs, section 8 or other non-RHS tenant subsidies, and state or Federal funds. A minimum of ten percent leveraged assistance is required to earn points; however, if the total percentage of leveraged assistance is less than ten percent and the proposal includes donated land, two points will be awarded for the donated land. To count as leveraged funds for purposes of the selection criteria, a commitment of funds must be provided with the preapplication. Points will be awarded in accordance with the following table. (0 to 20 points)

| Percentage | Points |
|------------------|--------|
| 75 or more | 20 |
| 60-74 | 18 |
| 50-59 | 16 |
| 40-49 | 12 |
| 30-39 | 10 |
| 20-29 | 8 |
| 10-19 | 5 |
| 0-9 | 0 |

Donated land in proposals with less than ten percent total leveraged assistance: 2.

(b) Percent of units for seasonal, temporary, migrant housing. (5 points for up to and including 50 percent of the units; 10 points for 51 percent or more.)

(c) The selection criteria includes one optional criteria set by the National Office. The National Office initiative will be used in the selection criteria as follows: Up to 10 points will be awarded based on the presence of and extent to which a tenant services plan exists that clearly outlines services that will be provided to the residents of the proposed project. These services may include, but are not limited to, transportation related services, on-site English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, move-in funds, emergency assistance funds, homeownership

counseling, food pantries, after school tutoring, and computer learning centers. Two points will be awarded for each resident service included in the tenant services plan up to a maximum of 10 points. Plans must detail how the services are to be administered, who will administer them, and where they will be administered. All tenant service plans must include letters of intent that clearly state the service that will be provided at the project for the benefit of the residents from any party administering each service, including the applicant. (0 to 10 points)

(2) States will conduct the preliminary eligibility review, score the applications, and forward them to the National Office.

(3) The National Office will rank all requests nationwide and distribute funds to States in rank order, within funding and RA limits. A lottery in accordance with 7 CFR 3560.56(c)(2) will be used for applications with tied point scores when they all cannot be funded. If insufficient funds or RA remain for the next ranked proposal, that applicant will be given a chance to modify their application to bring it within remaining funding levels. This will be repeated for each next ranked eligible proposal until an award can be made or the list is exhausted.

Dated: March 8, 2006.

Russell T. Davis,

Administrator, Rural Housing Service.

[FR Doc. 06-2449 Filed 3-17-06; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Housing Service

Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the Section 515 Rural Rental Housing Program for Fiscal Year 2006

AGENCY: Rural Housing Service (RHS), USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This NOFA announces the timeframe to submit applications for section 515 Rural Rental Housing (RRH) loan funds, including applications for the nonprofit set-aside for eligible nonprofit entities, the set-aside for the most Underserved Counties and Colonias (Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act), and the set-aside for Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities (EZ/ECs) and Rural Economic Area Partnership (REAP) zones. This document describes the methodology that will be used to distribute funds, the application process, submission requirements, and

areas of special emphasis or consideration.

DATES: The deadline for receipt of all applications in response to this NOFA is 5 p.m., local time for each Rural Development State Office on May 19, 2006. The application closing deadline is firm as to date and hour. The Agency will not consider any application that is received after the closing deadline. Applicants intending to mail applications must provide sufficient time to permit delivery on or before the closing deadline date and time. Acceptance by the United States Postal Service or private mailer does not constitute delivery. Facsimile (FAX) and postage due applications will not be accepted.

ADDRESSES: Applicants wishing to apply for assistance must contact the Rural Development State Office serving the place in which they desire to submit an application for rural rental housing to receive further information and copies of the application package. Rural Development will date and time stamp incoming applications to evidence timely receipt, and, upon request, will provide the applicant with a written acknowledgment of receipt. A listing of Rural Development State Offices, their addresses, telephone numbers, and person to contact follows:

Note: Telephone numbers listed are not toll-free.

Alabama State Office, Suite 601, Sterling Centre, 4121 Carmichael Road, Montgomery, AL 36106-3683, (334) 279-3455, TDD (334) 279-3495, James B. Harris.

Alaska State Office, 800 West Evergreen, Suite 201, Palmer, AK 99645, (907) 761-7740, TDD (907) 761-8905, Debbie Andrys.

Arizona State Office, Phoenix Courthouse and Federal Building, 230 North First Ave., Suite 206, Phoenix, AZ 85003-1706, (602) 280-8765, TDD (602) 280-8706, Johnna Vargas.

Arkansas State Office, 700 W. Capitol Ave., Room 3416, Little Rock, AR 72201-3225, (501) 301-3250, TDD (501) 301-3063, Greg Kemper.

California State Office, 430 G Street, #4169, Davis, CA 95616-4169, (530) 792-5830, TDD (530) 792-5848, Stephen Nnodim.

Colorado State Office, 655 Parfet Street, Room E100, Lakewood, CO 80215, (720) 544-2923, TDD (800) 659-2656, Mary Summerfield.

Connecticut, Served by Massachusetts State Office.

Delaware and Maryland State Office, 1221 College Park Drive, Suite 200, Dover, DE 19904, (302) 857-3615, TDD (302) 857-3585, Pat Baker.

Florida & Virgin Islands State Office, 4440 N.W. 25th Place, Gainesville, FL 32606-6563, (352) 338-3465, TDD (352) 338-3499, Elizabeth M. Whitaker.

Georgia State Office, Stephens Federal Building, 355 E. Hancock Avenue, Athens, GA 30601-2768, (706) 546-2164, TDD (706) 546-2034, Wayne Rogers.

Hawaii State Office, (Services all Hawaii, American Samoa Guam, and Western Pacific), Room 311, Federal Building, 154 Waiianuenue Avenue, Hilo, HI 96720, (808) 933-8305, TDD (808) 933-8321, Jack Mahan.

Idaho State Office, Suite A1, 9173 West Barnes Dr., Boise, ID 83709, (208) 378-5630, TDD (208) 378-5644, LaDonna McElligott.

Illinois State Office, 2118 West Park Court, Suite A, Champaign, IL 61821-2986, (217) 403-6222, TDD (217) 403-6240, Barry L. Ramsey.

Indiana State Office, 5975 Lakeside Boulevard, Indianapolis, IN 46278, (317) 290-3100 (ext. 423), TDD (317) 290-3343, John Young.

Iowa State Office, 210 Walnut Street Room 873, Des Moines, IA 50309, (515) 284-4685, TDD (515) 284-4858, Julie Sleeper.

Kansas State Office, 1303 SW First American Place, Suite 100, Topeka, KS 66604-4040, (785) 271-2721, TDD (785) 271-2767, Virginia M. Hammersmith.

Kentucky State Office, 771 Corporate Drive, Suite 200, Lexington, KY 40503, (859) 224-7325, TDD (859) 224-7422, Paul Higgins.

Louisiana State Office, 3727 Government Street, Alexandria, LA 71302, (318) 473-7962, TDD (318) 473-7655, Yvonne R. Emerson.

Maine State Office, 967 Illinois Ave., Suite 4, PO Box 405, Bangor, ME 04402-0405, (207) 990-9110, TDD (207) 942-7331, Bob Nadeau.

Maryland, Served by Delaware State Office.

Massachusetts, Connecticut, & Rhode Island State Office, 451 West Street, Amherst, MA 01002, (413) 253-4333, TDD (413) 253-4590, Donald Colburn.

Michigan State Office, 3001 Coolidge Road, Suite 200, East Lansing, MI 48823, (517) 324-5192, TDD (517) 337-6795, Julie Putnam.

Minnesota State Office, 375 Jackson Street Building, Suite 410, St. Paul, MN 55101-1853, (651) 602-7782, TDD (651) 602-7830, Peter Lundquist.

Mississippi State Office, Federal Building, Suite 831, 100 W. Capitol Street, Jackson, MS 39269, (601) 965-4325, TDD (601) 965-5850, Darnella Smith-Murray.

Missouri State Office, 601 Business Loop 70 West, Parkade Center, Suite 235, Columbia, MO 65203, (573) 876-0990, TDD (573) 876-9480, Colleen James.

Montana State Office, 900 Technology Blvd. Suite B, Bozeman, MT 59715, (406) 585-2565, TDD (406) 585-2562, Deborah Chorlton.

Nebraska State Office, Federal Building, Room 152, 100 Centennial Mall N, Lincoln, NE 68508, (402) 437-5594, TDD (402) 437-5093, Phil Willnerd.

Nevada State Office, 1390 South Curry Street, Carson City, NV 89703-9910, (775) 887-1222 (ext. 25), TDD (775) 885-0633, Angilla Denton.

New Hampshire State Office, Concord Center, Suite 218, Box 317, 10 Ferry Street, Concord, NH 03301-5004, (603) 223-6046, TDD (603) 229-0536, Jim Fowler.

New Jersey State Office, 5th Floor North Suite 500, 8000 Midlantic Dr., Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054, (856) 787-7740, TDD (856) 787-7784, George Hyatt, Jr.

New Mexico State Office, 6200 Jefferson St., NE, Room 255, Albuquerque, NM 87109, (505) 761-4944, TDD (505) 761-4938, Carmen N. Lopez.

New York State Office, The Galleries of Syracuse, 441 S. Salina Street, Suite 357 5th Floor, Syracuse, NY 13202, (315) 477-6419, TDD (315) 477-6447, George N. Von Pless.

North Carolina State Office, 4405 Bland Road, Suite 260, Raleigh, NC 27609, (919) 873-2066, TDD (919) 873-2003, Terry Strole.

North Dakota State Office, Federal Building, Room 208, 220 East Rosser, PO Box 1737, Bismarck, ND 58502, (701) 530-2049, TDD (701) 530-2113, Kathy Lake.

Ohio State Office, Federal Building, Room 507, 200 North High Street, Columbus, OH 43215-2477, (614) 255-2418, TDD (614) 255-2554, Melodie Taylor-Ward.

Oklahoma State Office, 100 USDA, Suite 108, Stillwater, OK 74074-2654, (405) 742-1070, TDD (405) 742-1007, Ivan S. Graves.

Oregon State Office, 101 SW Main, Suite 1410, Portland, OR 97204-3222, (503) 414-3352, TDD (503) 414-3387, Margo Donelin.

Pennsylvania State Office, One Credit Union Place, Suite 330, Harrisburg, PA 17110-2996, (717) 237-2281, TDD (717) 237-2261, Martha Eberhart.

Puerto Rico State Office, 654 Munoz Rivera Avenue, IBM Plaza, Suite 601, Hato Rey, PR 00918, (787) 766-5095 (ext. 249), TDD (787) 766-5332, Lourdes Colon.

Rhode Island, Served by Massachusetts State Office.

South Carolina State Office, Strom Thurmond Federal Building, 1835 Assembly Street, Room 1007, Columbia, SC 29201, (803) 253-3432, TDD (803) 765-5697, Larry D. Floyd.

South Dakota State Office, Federal Building, Room 210, 200 Fourth Street, SW., Huron, SD 57350, (605) 352-1132, TDD (605) 352-1147, Roger Hazuka or Pam Reilly.

Tennessee State Office, Suite 300, 3322 West End Avenue, Nashville, TN 37203-1084, (615) 783-1375, TDD (615) 783-1397, Don Harris.

Texas State Office, Federal Building, Suite 102, 101 South Main, Temple, TX 76501, (254) 742-9758, TDD (254) 742-9712, Julie Hayes.

Utah State Office, Wallace F. Bennett Federal Building, 125 S. State Street, Room 4311, Salt Lake City, UT 84147-0350, (801) 524-4325, TDD (801) 524-3309, Janice Kocher.

Vermont State Office, City Center, 3rd Floor, 89 Main Street, Montpelier, VT 05602, (802) 828-6021, TDD (802) 223-6365, Heidi Setien.

Virgin Islands, Served by Florida State Office.

Virginia State Office, Culpeper Building, Suite 238, 1606 Santa Rosa Road, Richmond, VA 23229, (804) 287-1596, TDD (804) 287-1753, CJ Michels.

Washington State Office, 1835 Black Lake Blvd., Suite B, Olympia, WA 98512, (360) 704-7730, TDD (360) 704-7760, Robert Lund.

Western Pacific Territories, Served by Hawaii State Office.

West Virginia State Office, Federal Building, 75 High Street, Room 320, Morgantown, WV 26505-7500, (304) 284-4872, TDD (304) 284-4836, David Cain.

Wisconsin State Office, 4949 Kirschling Court, Stevens Point, WI 54481, (715) 345-7615 (ext. 151), TDD (715) 345-7614, Peter Kohnen.

Wyoming State Office, PO Box 11005, Casper, WY 82602, (307) 233-6715, TDD (307) 233-6733, Jack Hyde.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For general information, applicants may contact Barbara Chism, Senior Loan Specialist, Multi-Family Housing Processing Division, Rural Housing Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Stop 0781, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC, 20250, telephone (202) 690-1436 (voice) (this is not a toll free number), (800) 877-8339 (TDD—Federal Information Relay Service), or via e-mail, Barbara.Chism@wdc.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Programs Affected

The Rural Rental Housing program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under Number 10.415, Rural Rental Housing Loans. Rental Assistance is listed in the Catalog under Number 10.427, Rural Rental Assistance Payments.

Discussion of Notice

I. Authority and Distribution Methodology

A. Authority

Section 515 of the Housing Act of 1949 (42 U.S.C. 1485) provides RHS with the authority to make loans to any individual, corporation, association, trust, Indian tribe, public or private nonprofit organization, consumer cooperative, or partnership to provide rental or cooperative housing and related facilities in rural areas for very-low, low, or moderate income persons or families, including elderly persons and persons with disabilities. Rental assistance (RA) is a tenant subsidy for very-low and low-income families residing in rural rental housing facilities with RHS financing and, when available, may be requested with applications for such facilities.

B. Distribution Methodology

The total amount available for Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 for section 515 is \$99,000,000, of which \$25,740,000 is available for new construction as follows:

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Section 515 new construction funds | \$8,562,510 |
| Set-aside for nonprofits | \$8,910,000 |

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Set-aside for Underserved Counties and Colonias | \$4,950,000 |
| Earmark for EZ, EC, and REAP Zones | \$2,327,490 |
| State Rental Assistance (RA) Designated reserve | \$990,000 |

C. Section 515 New Construction Funds

For FY 2006, the Administrator has determined that it would not be practical to allocate funds to States because of funding limitations; therefore, section 515 new construction funds will be distributed to States based on a National competition, as follows:

1. States will accept, review, score, and rank requests in accordance with 7 CFR 3560.56. The scoring factors are:

(a) The presence and extent of leveraged assistance for the units that will serve RHS income-eligible tenants at basic rents comparable to those if RHS provided full financing, computed as a percentage of the RHS total development cost (TDC). Loan proposals that include secondary funds from other sources that have been requested but have not yet been committed will be processed as follows: the proposal will be scored based on the requested funds, provided (1) the applicant includes evidence of a filed application for the funds; and (2) the funding date of the requested funds will permit processing of the loan request in the current funding cycle, or, if the applicant does not receive the requested funds, will permit processing of the next highest ranked proposal in the current year. Points will be awarded in accordance with the following table. (0 to 20 points)

| Percentage of leveraging | Points |
|--------------------------|--------|
| 75 or more | 20 |
| 70-74 | 19 |
| 65-69 | 18 |
| 60-64 | 17 |
| 55-59 | 16 |
| 50-54 | 15 |
| 45-49 | 14 |
| 40-44 | 13 |
| 35-39 | 12 |
| 30-34 | 11 |
| 25-29 | 10 |
| 20-24 | 9 |
| 15-19 | 8 |
| 10-14 | 7 |
| 5-9 | 6 |
| 0-4 | 0 |

(b) The units to be developed are in a colonia, tribal land, EZ, EC, or Rural Economic Area Partnership (REAP) community, or in a place identified in the State Consolidated Plan or State Needs Assessment as a high need community for multifamily housing. (20 points)

(c) Pursuant to 7 CFR 3560.56(c)(1)(iii), in states where RHS

has an on-going formal working relationship, agreement, or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the State to provide State resources (State funds, State RA, HOME funds, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, or Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)) for RHS proposals; or where the State provides preference or points to RHS proposals in awarding such State resources, 20 points will be provided to loan requests that include such State resources in an amount equal to at least 5 percent of the TDC. Native American Housing and Self Determination Act (NAHASDA) funds may be considered a State Resource if the Tribal Plan for NAHASDA funds contains provisions for partnering with RHS for multifamily housing. (National Office initiative)

(d) The loan request includes donated land meeting the provisions of 7 CFR 3560.56(c)(1)(iv). (5 points)

2. The National Office will rank all requests nationwide and distribute funds to States in rank order, within funding limits. If insufficient funds remain for the next ranked proposal, the Agency will select the next ranked proposal that falls within the remaining levels. Point score ties will be handled in accordance with 7 CFR 3560.56(c)(2).

D. Applications That Do Not Require New Construction RA

For FY 2006, new construction RA will not be available, except if matched by State RA. Unused RA may be allocated from within the State jurisdiction to approved new construction projects. Therefore, the Agency is inviting applications to develop units in markets that do not require RA. The market study for proposals must clearly demonstrate a need and demand for the units by prospective tenants at income levels that can support the proposed rents without tenant subsidies. The proposed units must offer amenities that are typical for the market area at rents that are comparable to conventional rents in the market for similar units.

E. Set-Asides

Loan requests will be accepted for the following set-asides:

1. Nonprofit set-aside. An amount of \$8,910,000 has been set aside for nonprofit applicants. All loan proposals must be in designated places in accordance with 7 CFR 3560.57. A State or jurisdiction may receive one proposal from this set-aside, which cannot exceed \$1 million. A State could get additional funds from this set-aside if any funds remain after funding one proposal from each participating State.

If there are insufficient funds to fund one loan request from each participating State, selection will be made by point score. If there are any funds remaining, they will be handled in accordance with 42 U.S.C. 1485(w)(3). Funds from this set-aside will be available only to nonprofit entities, which may include a partnership that has as its general partner a nonprofit entity or the nonprofit entity's for-profit subsidiary which will be receiving low-income housing tax credits authorized under section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. To be eligible for this set-aside, the nonprofit entity must be an organization that:

(a) Will own an interest in the project to be financed and will materially participate in the development and the operations of the project;

(b) Is a private organization that has nonprofit, tax exempt status under section 501(c)(3) or section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;

(c) Has among its purposes the planning, development, or management of low-income housing or community development projects; and

(d) Is not affiliated with or controlled by a for-profit organization.

2. Underserved counties and colonias set-aside. An amount of \$4,950,000 has been set aside for loan requests to develop units in the 100 most needy underserved counties or colonias as defined in section 509(f) of the Housing Act of 1949.

3. EZ, EC, and REAP Earmark. An amount of \$2,327,490 has been set aside to develop units in an EZ, EC, or REAP zone. Loan requests that are eligible for this set-aside are also eligible for regular section 515 funds. If requests for this set-aside exceed available funds, selection will be made in accordance with 7 CFR 3560.56(c).

II. Funding Limits

A. Individual loan requests may not exceed \$1 million. This applies to regular section 515 funds and set-aside funds. The Administrator may make an exception to this limit in cases where a State's average total development costs exceed the National average by 50 percent or more.

B. No State may receive more than \$2.5 million, including set-aside funds.

III. Rental Assistance (RA)

RA will not be available from the National Office for use with section 515 Rural Rental Housing new construction loans, except if matched by State RA. Unused RA may be allocated from within the State jurisdiction to approved new construction projects.

IV. Application Process

All applications for section 515 new construction funds must be filed with the appropriate Rural Development State Office and must meet the requirements of 7 CFR 3560.56, as well as comply with the provisions of Section V. of this Notice. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed and will be returned to the applicant. No application will be accepted after 5 p.m., local time, on the application deadline previously mentioned unless that date and time is extended by a Notice published in the **Federal Register**.

V. Application Submission Requirements

A. Each application shall include all of the information, materials, forms and exhibits required by 7 CFR 3560.56, as well as comply with the provisions of this Notice. Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to include a checklist and to have their applications indexed and tabbed to facilitate the review process. The Rural Development State Office will base its determination of completeness of the application and the eligibility of each applicant on the information provided in the application.

B. Applicants are advised to contact the Rural Development State Office serving the place in which they desire to submit an application for the following:

1. Application information; and
2. List of designated places for which applications for new section 515 facilities may be submitted.

VI. Areas of Special Emphasis or Consideration

A. The RHS encourages the use of funding from other sources in conjunction with Agency loans. This year there will be a National Office Initiative pursuant to 7 CFR 3560.56(c)(1)(iii), whereby preference points will be awarded to loan requests that meet the selection criteria as follows: In States where RHS has an on-going formal working relationship, agreement, or MOU with the State to provide State resources (State funds, State RA, HOME funds, CDBG funds, or LIHTC) for RHS proposals; or where the State provides preference or points to RHS proposals in awarding these State Resources, 20 points will be provided to loan requests that include such State resources in an amount equal to at least 5 percent of the TDC. NAHASDA funds may be considered a State Resource if the Tribal Plan for NAHASDA funds contains provisions for partnering with RHS for multifamily housing.

B. \$8,910,000 is available nationwide in a set-aside for eligible nonprofit organizations as defined in 42 U.S.C. 1485(w).

C. \$4,950,000 is available nationwide in a set-aside for the 100 most Underserved Counties and Colonias.

D. \$2,327,490 is available nationwide in an earmark for EZ, EC, and REAP zone.

E. \$990,000 is available nationwide in a reserve for States with viable State RA programs. In order to participate, States are to submit specific written information about the State RA program, i.e., a memorandum of understanding, documentation from the provider, etc., to the National Office.

Dated: March 8, 2006.

Russell T. Davis,

Administrator, Rural Housing Service.

[FR Doc. 06-2450 Filed 3-17-06; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-XV-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Housing Service

Notice of Funds Availability for the Section 533 Housing Preservation Grants for Fiscal Year 2006

Announcement Type: Initial Notice inviting applications from qualified applicants for Fiscal Year 2006.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Numbers (CFDA): 10.433.

SUMMARY: The Rural Housing Service (RHS) announces that it is soliciting competitive applications under its Housing Preservation Grant (HPG) program. The HPG program is a grant program which provides qualified public agencies, private nonprofit 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. This action is taken to comply with Agency regulations found in 7 CFR part 1944, subpart N, which require the Agency to announce the opening and closing dates for receipt of preapplications for HPG funds from eligible applicants. The intended effect of this Notice is to provide eligible organizations notice of these dates.

DATES: The closing deadline for receipt of all applications in response to this Notice is 5 p.m., local time for each Rural Development State Office on May 19, 2006. The application closing

deadline is firm as to date and hour. RHS will not consider any application that is received after the closing deadline. Applicants intending to mail applications must provide sufficient time to permit delivery on or before the closing deadline date and time. Acceptance by the United States Postal Service or private mailer does not constitute delivery. Facsimile (FAX) and postage due applications will not be accepted.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Paperwork Reduction Act

The reporting requirements contained in this Notice have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget under Control Number 0575-0115.

Program Administration

I. Funding Opportunities Description

The funding instrument for the HPG Program will be a grant agreement. The term of the grant can vary from 1 to 2 years, depending on available funds and demand. No maximum or minimum grant levels have been established at the National level. You should contact the Rural Development State Office to determine the allocation.

II. Award Information

For Fiscal Year 2006, \$10,497,716 is available for the HPG Program. The total includes \$597,716 in carryover funds. An earmark of \$594,000 has been established for grants located in Empowerment Zones, Enterprise Communities, and REAP Zones and other funds will be distributed under a formula allocation to States pursuant to 7 CFR part 1940, subpart L, "Methodology and Formulas for Allocation of Loan and Grant Program Funds." Decisions on funding will be based on pre-applications.

III. Eligibility Information

7 CFR part 1944, subpart N provides details on what information must be contained in the preapplication package. Entities wishing to apply for assistance should contact the Rural Development State Office to receive further information, the State allocation of funds, and copies of the preapplication package. Eligible entities for these competitively awarded grants include state and local governments, nonprofit corporations, Federally recognized Indian tribes, and consortia of eligible entities.

Federally recognized Indian tribes are exempt from the requirement to consult with local leaders, found in 7 CFR 1944.674, that mentions that the applicant announce the availability of