

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development (RD) is inviting proposals for funding through the Farm Labor Housing loan and grant programs. The deadline for submitting pre-applications is Sep. 17.

Through the Rural Housing Service, USDA plans to award loans and grants to increase the supply of available rental housing for domestic farm laborers.

The housing is intended for any domestic farm laborer who receives a substantial portion of his/her income from the primary productions of processed or unprocessed agricultural or aquacultural commodities.

It must be operated on a non-profit basis. Groups eligible for loans and grants include housing authorities, state and local governments, Indian tribes, non-profit organizations, and community- and faith-based groups.

Entities that construct new, off-farm housing for farm workers may be eligible for operating or rental assistance in addition to construction/rehabilitation loans and grants. Under the rental assistance program, USDA RD pays the owner of a housing complex the difference between the tenant's contribution (30 percent of his or her adjusted income) and the monthly rental rate.

Priority will be given to applicants seeking funds for housing projects that are energy efficient and generate energy—such as through geo-exchange systems, wind turbines, and photovoltaic systems. In addition, points and consideration will be given for property management green certifications from a variety of credentialing entities.

The application process will be in two phases: the initial pre-application (or proposal) and the submission of a final application. Pre-applications can be submitted either electronically using the FLH pre-application form found at:

http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/HAD-Farm_Labor_Grants.html or in a hard copy submitted to the appropriate RD Office where the project will be located.

A Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) was published in the July 18, 2012, Vol. 77, No. 138 Federal Register (pages 42258–42265) inviting proposals from eligible applicants for fiscal year 2012 funding under the Section 514/516 Farm Labor Housing (FLH) loan and grant programs. The NOFA can be accessed electronically at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-07-18/pdf/2012-17462.pdf>. The NOFA provides detailed information on the application, scoring, and selection process.

For additional information, contact Linda Anders, (402) 437-5734; (402) 437-5093 TDY or linda.anders@ne.usda.gov.