

RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM UPDATES

Titus Falkenburg | USDA Rural Development

This article details this year's latest updates to the Water and Environmental Program (WEP) for Rural Development.

CENSUS DATA

We continue to use 2010 census data to determine a community's population and the American Community Survey (ACS) to determine their Median Household Income (MHI). Communities must have a population under 10,000 to qualify for WEP and the MHI determines grant and interest rate eligibility.

Population data will be from the 2010 Decennial Census (2010 Demographic Profile Data set) and can be found at factfinder2.census.gov. Income data is provided by the ACS 2006 - 2010 5-year estimate (also found on the same website).

MAXIMUM GRANT CAPS

The following information details the maximum grant and interest rate that a community can receive based on 2010 census data. Please note that the interest rates change each quarter. Those listed below are based on 2nd quarter FY16 (i.e. January thru March 2016)

MHI less than \$45,506 and meets health/sanitary standards

Interest - Poverty Rate (1.875%)

Grant – 75% of total project costs up to a maximum of \$750,000

(Note: Potential for only \$500,000 maximum grant under "de-minimus" rule)

MHI less than \$45,506 and does NOT meet health/sanitary standards

Interest – Intermediate Rate (2.5%)

Grant – 45% of total project costs up to a maximum of \$500,000

MHI between \$45,506 and \$56,882

Interest – Intermediate Rate (2.5%)

Grant – 45% of total project costs up to a maximum of \$500,000

MHI greater than \$56,882

Interest – Market Rate (3.75%)

Grant – Not available

Grant only projects

Limited number of projects and only a maximum grant of

\$500,000

Large Projects – This year we are allowing applicants with large projects (over \$4M) to potentially receive bigger grants:

If RD funding is over \$4M, applicant could qualify for a maximum grant of \$1M.

If RD funding is over \$5M, applicant could qualify for a maximum grant of \$1.25M.

If RD funding is over \$6M, applicant could qualify for a maximum grant of \$1.5M.

SCORING SYSTEM

Our priority point scoring system is from RUS Bulletin 1780-1 located on our website at www.rd.usda.gov/ny. These points remain unchanged; however we have updated the guidance for additional points awarded by our State Office (maximum of 15). These points are awarded to improve compatibility/coordination between our program and other agencies' selection systems and to assist those projects that are most cost effective and that provide for effective program fund utilization. This updated list is as follows:

ELEMENT	POINTS
Joint Projects or Shared Services	5
Asset Management Plan (Sustainability)	5
"Green" Energy Conservation Elements	5
Strategic Planning (Proposed Project Development)	5
Notice of Violation has been Issued by Regulatory Agency	10
Very Low Median Household Income (Less than \$35,000)	10
Accident or Natural Disasters	10
Necessary to meet EPA's arsenic rule	10
Needed to meet State Director or Program Goals (to be assigned by RD)	15
Subsequent Phase of Project previously funded by RD	15
Project under NYS Consent Order	15
High Poverty Area per RD Poverty Targeting Strategy	15

I hope that this information assists you with future Rural Development projects. We are currently accepting applications, so please submit your application now. Your comments and/or questions are always welcome. Please feel free to contact me at (315) 477-6465 or titus.falkenburg@ny.usda.gov or visit our website at www.rd.usda.gov/ny. 💧💧💧