



Fast Facts!

Preserving Access to Rural Housing Programs

Unless Congress acts, 923 rural communities will no longer be eligible for critical Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Housing programs and will be cut off from what is often their *only* source of federal housing funding.

Defining “Rural”

By March 27, 2013, USDA will revise its definition of “rural” under Section 520 of the Housing Act of 1949 with data from the 2010 Census. As a result, 923 communities will lose their eligibility for USDA Rural Housing programs:

- ❖ To be eligible, rural communities must have a population that is: (1) less than 10,000; or (2) less than 20,000 if *not* located in a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).
 - Because fully half of the entire rural population lives in a MSA, this definition will impact communities that are – by any measure – still rural.
- ❖ The population limit is far too restrictive, limiting flexibility and choice.
 - Many rural families want to live in growing communities where they can better access public transportation, health services, water and sewer systems, and other community services.

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NRHC supports a long-term solution that maintains eligibility for rural communities for at least 10 years and increases the population threshold to 35,000. At a minimum, however, Congress should enact a 1-year extension of current law.

- ❖ Senate and House bills:
 - The Senate Farm Bill includes an amendment, sponsored by Sen. Nelson (D-NE), Sen. Johanns (R-NE), and Sen. Johnson (D-SD) that would extend current law for 10 years and increase the population limit to 35,000.
 - The Senate Agriculture Appropriations bill includes language to extend eligibility for all rural communities for one year.
 - Rep. Fortenberry (R-NE) and over 100 Representatives support an amendment to the House FY13 Agriculture Appropriations bill that would extend current law for one year.
- ❖ Extending current law has no impact on the federal deficit. These bills only guarantee *eligibility* for Rural Housing programs, not funding. As such, rural families in these communities must continue to apply for funding as required.

Learn more about how the “rural” definition will impact your community.

The National Rural Housing Coalition is national member organization of community groups, public officials, and non-profit developers who believe that rural people have the right, regardless of income, to decent, affordable housing, clean drinking water, and basic community services.