

requirements of 35 U.S.C. 209 and 37 CFR 404.7.

Richard J. Brenner,
Assistant Administrator.

[FR Doc. 2012-1102 Filed 1-19-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-03-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Lake Tahoe Basin Federal Advisory Committee (LTFAC)

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Lake Tahoe Federal Advisory Committee will hold a meeting on February 9, 2012 at the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, 128 Market Street, Stateline, NV 89449. This Committee, established by the Secretary of Agriculture on December 15, 1998 (64 FR 2876), is chartered to provide advice to the Secretary on implementing the terms of the Federal Interagency Partnership on the Lake Tahoe Region and other matters raised by the Secretary.

DATES: The meeting will be held February 9, 2012, beginning at 9 a.m. and ending at 12 p.m.

ADDRESSES: Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, 128 Market Street, Stateline, NV 89449.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR TO REQUEST AN ACCOMMODATION CONTACT:

Arla Hains, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, Forest Service, 35 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150, (530) 543-2773.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Items to be covered on the agenda: (1) Review and confirm the LTFAC Vision and Strategic Planning Session outcomes, and (2) public comment.

All Lake Tahoe Basin Federal Advisory Committee meetings are open to the public. Interested citizens are encouraged to attend at the above address. Issues may be brought to the attention of the Committee during the open public comment period at the meeting or by filing written statements with the secretary for the Committee before or after the meeting. Please refer any written comments to the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit at the contact address stated above.

Dated: January 13, 2012.

Michael Gabor,
Acting Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 2012-1117 Filed 1-19-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Business-Cooperative Service

Notice of Funding Availability for the Rural Energy for America Program

AGENCY: Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA).

SUMMARY: This NOFA announces the acceptance of applications under the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) for Fiscal Year 2012 for financial assistance as follows: grants, guaranteed loans, and combined grants and guaranteed loans for the development and construction of renewable energy systems and for energy efficiency improvement projects; grants for conducting energy audits; grants for conducting renewable energy development assistance; and grants for conducting renewable energy system feasibility studies. The Notice also announces the availability of \$25.4 million of Fiscal Year 2012 budget authority to fund these REAP activities, which will support at least \$12.5 million in grant program level and up to approximately \$48.5 million in guaranteed loan program level.

DATES: In order to be considered for Fiscal Year 2012 funds, complete applications under this Notice must be received by the appropriate USDA Rural Development State Office no later than 4:30 p.m. local time of the dates as follows:

For renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement grant applications and combination grant and guaranteed loan applications: March 30, 2012.

For renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement guaranteed loan only applications: On a continuous basis up to June 29, 2012.

For renewable energy system feasibility study applications: March 30, 2012.

For energy audits and renewable energy development assistance applications: February 21, 2012.

ADDRESSES: See the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for addresses concerning applications for the Rural Energy for America Program for Fiscal Year 2012 funds.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For information about this Notice, please contact Mr. Kelley Oehler, Branch Chief, USDA Rural Development, Energy Division, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20250. Telephone: (202) 720-6819. Email: kelley.oehler@wdc.usda.gov.

For further information on this program, please contact the applicable USDA Rural Development Energy Coordinator for your respective State, as provided in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section of this Notice.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Fiscal Year 2012 Applications for the Rural Energy for America Program

Applications. Application materials may be obtained by contacting one of Rural Development's Energy Coordinators. In addition, for grant applications, applicants may access the electronic grant application for the Rural Energy for America Program at <http://www.Grants.gov>. To locate the downloadable application package for this program, the applicant must use the program's Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number 10.868 or FedGrants Funding Opportunity Number, which can be found at <http://www.Grants.gov>.

Application submittal. For renewable energy system, energy efficiency improvement, and feasibility study applications, submit complete paper applications to the Rural Development State Office in the State in which the applicant's proposed project is located. For energy audit and renewable energy development assistance applications, submit complete paper applications to the Rural Development State Office in the State in which the applicant is headquartered.

Submit electronic grant only applications at <http://www.grants.gov>, following the instructions found on this Web site.

Rural Development Energy Coordinators

Note: Telephone numbers listed are not toll-free.

Alabama

Marcia Johnson, USDA Rural Development, Sterling Centre, Suite 601, 4121 Carmichael Road, Montgomery, AL 36106-3683, (334) 279-3453, marcia.johnson@al.usda.gov.

Alaska

Chad Stovall, USDA Rural Development, 800 West Evergreen, Suite 201, Palmer, AK 99645-6539, (907) 761-7718, chad.stovall@ak.usda.gov.

American Samoa (See Hawaii)

Arizona

Gary Mack, USDA Rural Development, 230 North First Avenue, Suite 206,

- Phoenix, AZ 85003-1706, (602) 280-8717, Gary.Mack@az.usda.gov.
- Arkansas**
Laura Tucker, USDA Rural Development, 700 West Capitol Avenue, Room 3416, Little Rock, AR 72201-3225, (501) 301-3280, Laura.Tucker@ar.usda.gov.
- California**
Philip Brown, USDA Rural Development, 430 G Street, #4169, Davis, CA 95616, (530) 792-5811, Phil.brown@ca.usda.gov.
- Colorado**
Janice Pond, USDA Rural Development, Denver Federal Center, Building 56, Room 2300, P.O. Box 25426, Denver, CO 80225-0426, (720) 544-2907, Janice.pond@co.usda.gov.
- Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands-CNMI (See Hawaii)**
- Connecticut (see Massachusetts)**
- Delaware/Maryland**
Bruce Weaver, USDA Rural Development, 1221 College Park Drive, Suite 200, Dover, DE 19904, (302) 857-3629, Bruce.Weaver@de.usda.gov.
- Federated States of Micronesia (See Hawaii)**
- Florida/Virgin Islands**
Angela Prioleau, USDA Rural Development, 4440 NW. 25th Place, Gainesville, FL 32606, (352) 338-3412, angela.prioleua@fl.usda.gov.
- Georgia**
J. Craig Scroggs, USDA Rural Development, 111 E. Spring St., Suite B, Monroe, GA 30655, Phone (770) 267-1413 ext. 113, craig.scroggs@ga.usda.gov.
- Guam (See Hawaii)**
- Hawaii/Guam/Republic of Palau/Federated States of Micronesia/Republic of the Marshall Islands/American Samoa/Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands-CNMI**
Tim O'Connell, USDA Rural Development, Federal Building, Room 311, 154 Waianuenue Avenue, Hilo, HI 96720, (808) 933-8313, Tim.Oconnell@hi.usda.gov.
- Idaho**
Brian Buch, USDA Rural Development, 9173 W. Barnes Drive, Suite A1, Boise, ID 83709, (208) 378-5623, Brian.Buch@id.usda.gov.
- Illinois**
Mary Warren, USDA Rural Development, 2118 West Park Court, Suite A, Champaign, IL 61821, (217) 403-6218, mary.warren@il.usda.gov.
- Indiana**
Jerry Hay, USDA Rural Development, 5975 Lakeside Boulevard, Indianapolis, IN 46278, (812) 346-3411, Ext. 126, Jerry.Hay@in.usda.gov.
- Iowa**
Kate Sand, USDA Rural Development, 909 E. 2nd Avenue, Suite C, Indianola, IA 50125, (515) 961-5365 Ext.130, kate.sand@ia.usda.gov.
- Kansas**
David Kramer, USDA Rural Development, 1303 SW First American Place, Suite 100, Topeka, KS 66604-4040, (785) 271-2730, david.kramer@ks.usda.gov.
- Kentucky**
Scott Maas, USDA Rural Development, 771 Corporate Drive, Suite 200, Lexington, KY 40503, (859) 224-7435, scott.maas@ky.usda.gov.
- Louisiana**
Kevin Boone, USDA Rural Development, 905 Jefferson Street, Suite 320, Lafayette, LA 70501, (337) 262-6601, Ext. 133, Kevin.Boone@la.usda.gov.
- Maine**
Beverly Stone, USDA Rural Development, 967 Illinois Avenue, Suite 4, P.O. Box 405, Bangor, ME 04402-0405, (207) 990-9125, Beverly.Stone@me.usda.gov.
- Maryland (see Delaware)**
- Massachusetts/Rhode Island/Connecticut**
Charles W. Dubuc, USDA Rural Development, 60 Quaker Lane, Suite 44, Warwick, RI 02886, (401) 822-8867, Charles.Dubuc@ma.usda.gov.
- Michigan**
Rick Vanderbeek, USDA Rural Development, 3001 Coolidge Road, Suite 200, East Lansing, MI 48823, (517) 324-5157, rick.vanderbeek@mi.usda.gov.
- Minnesota**
Ron Oman, USDA Rural Development, 375 Jackson St., Suite 410, St. Paul, MN 55101, (651) 602-7796, Ron.Omann@mn.usda.gov.
- Mississippi**
G. Gary Jones, USDA Rural Development, 100 W. Capital Street, Suite 831, Jackson, MS 39269, (601) 965-5457, george.jones@ms.usda.gov.
- Missouri**
Matt Moore, USDA Rural Development, 601 Business Loop 70 West, Parkade Center, Suite 235, Columbia, MO 65203, (573) 876-9321, matt.moore@mo.usda.gov.
- Montana**
John Guthmiller, USDA Rural Development, 2229 Boot Hill Court, P.O. Box 850, Bozeman, MT 59771, (406) 585-2540, John.Guthmiller@mt.usda.gov.
- Nebraska**
Debra Yocum, USDA Rural Development, 100 Centennial Mall North, Room 152, Federal Building, Lincoln, NE 68508, (402) 437-5554, Debra.Yocum@ne.usda.gov.
- Nevada**
Mark Williams, USDA Rural Development, 1390 South Curry Street, Carson City, NV 89703, (775) 887-1222, mark.williams@nv.usda.gov.
- New Hampshire (See Vermont)**
- New Jersey**
Victoria Fekete, USDA Rural Development, 8000 Midlantic Drive, Suite 500N, Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054, (856) 787-7752, Victoria.Fekete@nj.usda.gov.
- New Mexico**
Jesse Bopp, USDA Rural Development, 6200 Jefferson Street, NE., Room 255, Albuquerque, NM 87109, (505) 761-4952, Jesse.bopp@nm.usda.gov.
- New York**
Scott Collins, USDA Rural Development, 9025 River Road, Marcy, NY 13403, (315) 736-3316 Ext. 127, scott.collins@ny.usda.gov.
- North Carolina**
David Thigpen, USDA Rural Development, 4405 Bland Rd., Suite 260, Raleigh, NC 27609, (919) 873-2065, David.Thigpen@nc.usda.gov.
- North Dakota**
Dennis Rodin, USDA Rural Development, Federal Building, Room 208, 220 East Rosser Avenue, P.O. Box 1737, Bismarck, ND 58502-1737, (701) 530-2068, Dennis.Rodin@nd.usda.gov.
- Ohio**
Randy Monhemius, USDA Rural Development, Federal Building, Room 507, 200 North High Street, Columbus, OH 43215-2418, (614) 255-2424, Randy.Monhemius@oh.usda.gov.

Oklahoma

Jody Harris, USDA Rural Development,
100 USDA, Suite 108, Stillwater, OK
74074-2654, (405) 742-1036,
Jody.harris@ok.usda.gov.

Oregon

Don Hollis, USDA Rural Development,
200 SE Hailey Ave., Suite 105,
Pendleton, OR 97801, (541) 278-8049,
Ext. 129, Don.Hollis@or.usda.gov.

Pennsylvania

Amanda Krugh, USDA Rural
Development, 1 Credit Union Place,
Suite 330, Harrisburg, PA 17110-
2996, Phone: (717) 237-2289,
Amanda.Krugh@pa.usda.gov.

Puerto Rico

Luis Garcia, USDA Rural Development,
IBM Building, 654 Munoz Rivera
Avenue, Suite 601, Hato Rey, PR
00918-6106, (787) 766-5091, Ext.
251, Luis.Garcia@pr.usda.gov.

Republic of Palau (See Hawaii)

**Republic of the Marshall Islands (See
Hawaii)**

Rhode Island (see Massachusetts)

South Carolina

Shannon Legree, USDA Rural
Development, Strom Thurmond
Federal Building, 1835 Assembly
Street, Room 1007, Columbia, SC
29201, (803) 253-3150,
Shannon.Legree@sc.usda.gov.

South Dakota

Kenneth Lynch, USDA Rural
Development, Federal Building, Room
210, 200 4th Street SW., Huron, SD
57350, (605) 352-1120,
ken.lynch@sd.usda.gov.

Tennessee

Will Dodson, USDA Rural Development,
3322 West End Avenue, Suite 300,
Nashville, TN 37203-1084, (615) 783-
1350, will.dodson@tn.usda.gov.

Texas

Billy Curb, USDA Rural Development,
Federal Building, Suite 102, 101
South Main Street, Temple, TX 76501,
(254) 742-9775,
billy.curb@tx.usda.gov.

Utah

Roger Koon, USDA Rural Development,
Wallace F. Bennett Federal Building,
125 South State Street, Room 4311,
Salt Lake City, UT 84138, (801) 524-
4301, Roger.Koon@ut.usda.gov.

Vermont/New Hampshire

Cheryl Ducharme, USDA Rural
Development, 89 Main Street, 3rd

Floor, Montpelier, VT 05602, (802)
828-6083,
cheryl.ducharme@vt.usda.gov.

Virginia

Laurette Tucker, USDA Rural
Development, 1606 Santa Rosa Road,
Suite 238, Richmond, VA 23229, (434)
392-4906 Ext. 125, (804) 287-1606,
Laurette.Tucker@va.usda.gov.

Virgin Islands (see Florida)

Washington

Mary Traxler, USDA Rural
Development, 1835 Black Lake Blvd.
SW., Suite B, Olympia, WA 98512,
(360) 704-7762,
Mary.Traxler@wa.usda.gov.

West Virginia

Lisa Sharp, USDA Rural Development,
1550 Earl Core Road, Suite 101,
Morgantown, WV 26505-7500, (304)
284-4871, lisa.sharp@wv.usda.gov.

Wisconsin

Brenda Heinen, USDA Rural
Development, 4949 Kirschling Court,
Stevens Point, WI 54481, (715) 345-
7615, Ext. 139,
Brenda.Heinen@wi.usda.gov.

Wyoming

Jon Crabtree, USDA Rural Development,
Dick Cheney Federal Building, 100
East B Street, Room 1005, P.O. Box
11005, Casper, WY 82602, (307) 233-
6719, Jon.Crabtree@wy.usda.gov.

Paperwork Reduction Act

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the information collection requirements associated with renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement grants and guaranteed loans, as covered in this Notice, has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under OMB Control Number 0570-0050. The information collection requirements associated with energy audit and renewable energy development assistance grants and with renewable energy feasibility study grants have also been approved by OMB under OMB Control Number 0570-0059 and OMB Control Number 0570-0061, respectively.

Overview

Federal Agency Name: Rural Business-Cooperative Service.
Contract Proposal Title: Rural Energy for America Program.
Announcement Type: Initial announcement.
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 10.868.

Dates: Grant applications and combined grant and guaranteed loan applications for renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvement projects under this Notice will be accepted up to March 30, 2012. Guaranteed loan only applications for renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement projects will be accepted on a continuous basis, but to compete for Fiscal Year 2012 funding, complete applications must be submitted to the Agency by June 29, 2012. Applications for renewable energy feasibility studies will be accepted up to March 30, 2012. Energy audit and renewable energy development assistance grants will be accepted up to February 21, 2012.

For all applications submitted under this Notice, complete applications must be received by the appropriate USDA Rural Development State Office no later than 4:30 p.m. local time of the applicable application deadline date in order to be considered for Fiscal Year 2012 funds. Any application received after its applicable date and time, regardless of the postmark on the application, will not be considered for Fiscal Year 2012 funds.

Availability of Notice: This Notice for the Rural Energy for America Program is available through the USDA Rural Development Web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/Energy.html>.

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Purpose of the Rural Energy for America Program. The program is designed to help agricultural producers and rural small businesses reduce energy costs and consumption and help meet the Nation's critical energy needs.

B. Statutory Authority. This program is authorized under 7 U.S.C. 8107.

C. Definition of Terms. The definitions applicable to this Notice are published at 7 CFR 4280.103. In addition, the following definition applies to this Notice.

Hybrid. A combination of two or more renewable energy technologies that are incorporated into a unified system to support a single project.

II. Award Information

A. Available funds. The amount of funds available for renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvements in Fiscal Year 2012 will be approximately \$59.6 million. For renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement projects only, there will be an allocation of funds to each State, and the Rural Development's National Office will maintain a reserve of funds.

The amount of grant funds available for renewable energy system feasibility studies in Fiscal Year 2012 will be \$500,000. The balance of the funds unused for the feasibility study grants may be utilized in any of the renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement National competitions.

The amount of funds available for energy audits and renewable energy development assistance in Fiscal Year 2012 will be \$880,000. Obligations of these funds will take place through March 31, 2012. Any unobligated balances will be moved to the renewable energy subsidy account as of April 1, 2012. These funds may be utilized in any of the renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement National competitions. In order to ensure that small projects have a fair opportunity to compete for the funding and are consistent with the priorities set forth in the statute, the Agency will set-aside approximately \$5 million to fund grants of \$20,000 or less. Obligations of these funds will take place through June 30, 2012. Any unobligated balances will be moved to the renewable energy subsidy account as of July 1, 2012. These funds may be utilized in any of the renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement National competitions.

B. Approximate number of awards. The number of awards will depend on the amount of funds made available and on the number of eligible applicants participating in this program.

C. State and National competitions. Renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement applications for Fiscal Year 2012 funds will compete for funds allocated to their State for competition. Separate competitions will be held for (1) grant only and grant and guaranteed loan combination applications; (2) grants of \$20,000 or less applications, and (3) guaranteed loan only applications. Grant only and grant and guaranteed loan combination applications and grants of \$20,000 or less applications will each have one State competition. All unfunded eligible grant only and grant and guaranteed loan combination applications received by March 30, 2011, will be competed against other grant only and grant and guaranteed loan combination applications from other States at a final National competition. However, the Agency reserves the right to hold a separate National competition for grants of \$20,000 or less if funding remains after the State competition. Obligations of these funds will take place through June 30, 2012. State competitions will be held bi-weekly for guaranteed loan only applications. A minimum score of 50 is required for guaranteed loan only

applications to compete in the State competitions. If a State does not have sufficient funds to make a guaranteed loan award, funding may be obtained from the guaranteed loan reserves held at the National Office. The guaranteed loan application will not have to compete any further. Finally, all unfunded eligible guaranteed loan only applications received by June 29, 2011, will be competed against other guaranteed loan only applications from other States at a final National competition if the guaranteed loan reserves have not been completely depleted. If funds remain after the final guaranteed loan only National competition, the Agency may elect to utilize budget authority to fund additional grant only and grant and guaranteed loan combination applications that competed in the National competition. Renewable energy system feasibility study grant applications and energy audits and renewable energy development assistance grant applications will compete in separate National competitions.

D. Type of instrument. Grant, guaranteed loan, and grant/guaranteed loan combinations.

E. Funding limitations. The following funding limitations apply to applications submitted under to this Notice.

(1) *Maximum grant assistance to an entity.* For the purposes of this Notice, the maximum amount of grant assistance to an entity will not exceed \$750,000 for Fiscal Year 2012 based on the total amount of renewable energy system, energy efficiency improvement, and renewable energy feasibility study grants awarded to an entity under the Rural Energy for America Program.

(2) *Maximum percentage of Agency funding.* The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, Pub. L. No. 110-234, 122 Stat. 93 (May 22, 2008) (2008 Farm Bill) mandates the maximum percentages of funding that USDA Rural Development will provide. Within the maximum funding amounts specified in this Notice, renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement funding approved for guaranteed loan only requests and for combination guaranteed loan and grant requests will not exceed 75 percent of eligible project costs, with the grant portion not to exceed 25 percent of total eligible project costs, whether the grant is part of a combination request or is a stand-alone grant.

(3) *Reallocation of loan and grants funds.* The Agency reserves the right, at its discretion, to move funds between grant and loan budget authority based

upon the demand of applications received under this Notice after June 29, 2012.

(4) *Universal identifier and Central Contract Registration (CCR).* Unless exempt under 2 CFR § 25.110, all applicants must:

(a) Be registered in the CCR prior to submitting an application or plan;

(b) Maintain an active CCR registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by the Agency; and

(c) Provide its DUNS number in each application or plan it submits to the Agency.

(5) *Transparency Act Reporting.* All recipients of Federal financial assistance are required to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation in accordance with 2 CFR part 170. So long as an entity applicant does not have an exception under 2 CFR section 170.110(b), the applicant must have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the reporting requirements should the applicant receive funding. See 2 CFR section 170.200(b).

(6) *Renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement grant-only applications.* For renewable energy system grants, the minimum grant is \$2,500 and the maximum is \$500,000. For energy efficiency improvement grants, the minimum grant is \$1,500 and the maximum grant is \$250,000.

(7) *Renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement loan guarantee-only applications.* For renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement loan guarantees, the minimum guaranteed loan amount is \$5,000 and the maximum amount of a guaranteed loan to be provided to a borrower is \$25 million.

(8) *Renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement guaranteed loan and grant combination applications.* Funding for grant and loan combination packages for renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvement projects are subject to the funding limitations specified in Section II.E.(2). The maximum amount for the grant portion is \$500,000 for renewable energy systems and \$250,000 for energy efficiency improvements. The minimum amount of the grant portion is \$1,500 for either renewable energy systems or energy efficiency improvements. For the guarantee portion, the maximum amount is \$25 million and the minimum amount is \$5,000.

(9) *Renewable energy system feasibility study grant applications.* The maximum amount of grant funds that will be made available for an eligible

feasibility study project under this subpart to any one recipient will not exceed \$50,000 or 25 percent of the total eligible project cost of the study, whichever is less.

(10) *Energy audit and renewable energy development assistance grant applications.* The maximum aggregate amount of energy audit and renewable energy development assistance grants awarded to any one recipient under this Notice cannot exceed \$100,000 for Fiscal Year 2012. In addition, the 2008 Farm Bill mandates that the recipient of a grant that conducts an energy audit for an agricultural producer or a rural small business must require the agricultural producer or rural small business to pay at least 25 percent of the cost of the energy audit, which shall be retained by the eligible entity for the cost of the audit.

III. Eligibility Information

A. *Eligible applicants.* To be eligible for this program, an applicant must meet the eligibility requirements specified in 7 CFR 4280.109, 7 CFR 4280.110(c), and, as applicable, 7 CFR 4280.112, 7 CFR 4280.122, 7 CFR 4280.170, or 7 CFR 4280.186.

For the purpose of this Notice, and in addition to meeting the small business size determination as defined under small business in 7 CFR 4280.103, rural small business applicants must demonstrate that the majority (i.e. 51 percent or more) of their past 3 years' annual receipts from their business operation are derived from a rural area. If the rural small business applicant has not engaged in business operations for the past 3 years, than information for as long as the rural small business applicant has been in business must be submitted. To ensure that there is sufficient information for the Agency to make this determination; rural small business applicants, as part of their application requirements in 7 CFR 4280.116 (b)(v)(A), should list the physical address, total annual receipts and number of employees for each urban or rural location. The Agency will make this determination for rural small business applicants that do not have any annual receipts (new businesses only) on the location of the rural small business applicant.

B. *Eligible lenders.* To be eligible for this program, lenders must meet the eligibility requirements in 7 CFR 4280.130.

C. *Eligible projects.* To be eligible for this program, a project must meet the eligibility requirements specified in 7 CFR 4280.113, 7 CFR 4280.123, 7 CFR 4280.171, and 7 CFR 4280.187, as applicable.

IV. Fiscal Year 2012 Application and Submission Information

Applicants seeking to participate in this program must submit applications in accordance with this Notice and 7 CFR part 4280, subpart B, as applicable. Applicants must submit complete applications containing all parts necessary for the Agency to determine applicant and project eligibility, to score the application, and to conduct the technical evaluation, as applicable in order to be considered.

A. Where To Obtain Applications

Applicants may obtain applications from any USDA Rural Development Energy Coordinator, as provided in the **ADDRESSES** section of this Notice. In addition, for grant applications, applicants may access the electronic grant application for the Rural Energy for America Program at <http://www.Grants.gov>. To locate the downloadable application package for this program, the applicant must use the program's CFDA Number 10.868 or FedGrants Funding Opportunity Number, which can be found at <http://www.Grants.gov>.

When you enter the Grants.gov site, you will find information about submitting an application electronically through the site. To use *Grants.gov*, all applicants must have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number (unless the applicant is an individual), which can be obtained at no cost via a toll-free request line at 1 (866) 705-5711 or online at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. USDA Rural Development strongly recommends that applicants do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through *Grants.gov*.

B. When To Submit

Complete applications submitted under this Notice must be received by the appropriate USDA Rural Development State Office no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on the applicable date as identified in the **DATES** section of this Notice, in order to be considered for Fiscal Year 2012 funds. Any application received after 4:30 p.m. local time on the applicable date, regardless of the postmark on the application, will not be considered for Fiscal Year 2012 funds.

C. Where To Submit

All renewable energy system, energy efficiency improvement, and renewable energy system feasibility study applications are to be submitted to the USDA Rural Development Energy Coordinator in the State in which the

applicant's proposed project is located. All energy audit and renewable energy development assistance applications are to be submitted to the USDA Rural Development Energy Coordinator in the State in which the applicant is headquartered. A list of USDA Rural Development Energy Coordinators is provided in the **ADDRESSES** section of this Notice. Alternatively, for grant only applications, applicants may submit their electronic applications to the Agency via the Grants.gov Web site.

D. How To Submit

Applicants may submit their applications either as hard copy or electronically as specified in the following paragraphs. When submitting an application as hard copy, applicants must submit one original.

(1) *Grant applications.* All grant applications may be submitted either as hard copy to the appropriate Rural Development Energy Coordinator or electronically using the Government-wide Grants.gov Web site. Users of Grants.gov who download a copy of the application package may complete it off line and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site, including all information typically included on the application, and all necessary assurances and certifications. After electronically submitting an application through the Web site, the applicant will receive an automated acknowledgement from Grants.gov that contains a Grants.gov tracking number.

(2) *Guaranteed loan applications.* Guaranteed loan only applications (i.e., those that are not part of a guaranteed loan/grant combination request) must be submitted as hard copy.

(3) *Guaranteed loan/grant combination applications.* Applications for guaranteed loans/grants (combination applications) must be submitted as hard copy.

E. Other Submission Requirements and Information

(1) *Application restrictions.* Applicants may apply for only one renewable energy system project and one energy efficiency improvement project in Fiscal Year 2012. A renewable energy system application cannot be submitted in Fiscal Year 2012 if a REAP feasibility study grant application for the same renewable energy system is submitted in Fiscal Year 2012 and vice versa.

Applicants may only submit one renewable energy system feasibility study grant for Fiscal Year 2012 funds.

Applicants may only submit one energy audit grant application and one renewable energy development

assistance grant application for Fiscal Year 2012 funds.

(2) *Environmental information.* For the Agency to consider an application, the application must include all environmental review documents with supporting documentation in accordance with 7 CFR part 1940, subpart G. Applications for financial assistance for planning purposes or management and feasibility studies are typically categorically excluded from the environmental review process by 7 CFR 1940.310(e)(1). Any required environmental review must be completed in full prior to obligation of funds or the approval of the application.

(3) *Original signatures.* USDA Rural Development may request that the applicant provide original signatures on forms submitted through Grants.gov at a later date.

(4) *Award considerations.* In determining the amount of a renewable energy system or energy efficiency improvement grant or loan guarantee, the Agency will consider the six criteria specified in 7 CFR 4280.115(g) or 7 CFR 4280.124(f), as applicable.

(5) *Hybrid projects.* If the application is for a hybrid project, technical reports, as required under 7 CFR 4280.116(b)(7), must be prepared for each technology that comprises the hybrid project.

(6) *Multiple facilities.* Applicants may submit a single application that proposes to apply the same renewable energy system (including the same hybrid project) or energy efficiency improvement across multiple facilities. For example, a rural small business owner owns five retail stores and wishes to install solar panels on each store. The rural small business owner may submit a single application for installing the solar panels on the five stores. However, if this same owner wishes to install solar panels on three of the five stores and wind turbines for the other two stores, the owner can only submit an application for either the solar panels or for the wind turbines in the same fiscal year.

(7) *Applications from cooperatives.* In recognition of the International Year of Cooperatives, the Agency encourages cooperatives to submit applications for Fiscal Year 2012.

V. Program Provisions

This section of the Notice identifies the provisions of 7 CFR 4280, subpart B applicable to each type of funding available under REAP.

A. General

The provisions specified in 7 CFR 4280.101 through 4280.111 apply to this Notice.

B. Renewable Energy System and Energy Efficiency Improvement Project Grants

In addition to the other provisions of this Notice, the requirements specified in 7 CFR 4280.112 through 4280.121 apply to renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement projects grants.

C. Renewable Energy System and Energy Efficiency Improvement Project Guaranteed Loans

In addition to the other provisions of this Notice, the requirements specified in 7 CFR 4280.122 through 4280.160 apply to guaranteed loans for renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement projects. For Fiscal Year 2012, the guarantee fee amount is 1 percent of the guaranteed portion of the loan and the annual renewal fee is 0.250 percent (one-quarter of 1 percent) of the guaranteed portion of the loan.

D. Renewable Energy System and Energy Efficiency Improvement Project Grant and Guaranteed Loan Combined Requests

In addition to the other provisions of this Notice, the requirements specified in 7 CFR 4280.165 apply to a combined grant and guaranteed loan for renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement projects.

E. Renewable Energy System Feasibility Study Grants

In addition to the other provisions of this Notice, the requirements specified in 7 CFR 4280.170 through 4280.182 apply to renewable energy system feasibility study grants.

F. Energy Audit and Renewable Energy Development Assistance Grants

In addition to the other provisions of this Notice, the requirements specified in 7 CFR 4280.186 through 4280.196 apply to energy audit and renewable energy development assistance grants.

G. Resubmittal of Fiscal Year 2011 Renewable Energy System and Energy Efficiency Improvement Applications

If an applicant submitted an application for funding in Fiscal Year 2011 and that application was determined eligible but was not funded, the Agency will consider that Fiscal Year 2011 application for funding in Fiscal Year 2012 as provided in this section.

(1) *Written request.* An applicant must submit a written request for the Agency to consider its Fiscal Year 2011 application for Fiscal Year 2012 funds.

(i) For a guarantee loan and grant combination application, both the lender and grant applicant must submit

the written request to the Agency in order to be considered for Fiscal Year 2012 funds.

(ii) Except for simplified applications, applicants must provide current financial statements that meet the program requirements outlined in 7 CFR 4280.116(b)(4) with the written request.

(iii) Written requests to consider Fiscal Year 2011 applications for Fiscal Year 2012 funds may be submitted at any time during Fiscal Year 2012, up to and including 4:30 p.m. local time on March 30, 2012, to be considered for Fiscal Year 2012 funds. Written requests received after this time and date will not be accepted by the Agency and the applicant's Fiscal Year 2011 application will not be considered for Fiscal Year 2012 funds.

(2) *Revisions/change in score to Fiscal Year 2011 applications.* If an applicant plans to make any revisions to its Fiscal Year 2011 application or if the required current financial statements results in a change to the application's score (even if no other revisions to the Fiscal Year 2011 application are planned), a new application meeting the requirements of this Notice must be submitted in order to be considered for Fiscal Year 2012 funds and a new submission date of record will be established.

(3) *No revisions/changes in score to Fiscal Year 2011 applications.* If an applicant does not plan to make any revisions to its Fiscal Year 2011 application and the required current financial statements do not result in a change to the application's score, a new application is not required and the submission date of record remains unchanged from its original Fiscal Year 2011 submittal date.

H. Award Process

In addition to the process for awarding funding under 7 CFR 4280, subpart B, the Agency will make awards using the following considerations:

(1) *Funding renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement grant and grant/guaranteed loan awards.* Considering the availability of funds, the Agency will fund those grant only applications and grant/guaranteed loan applications that score the highest based on the grant score of the application; that is, the grant score an application receives will be compared to the grant scores of other applications, with higher scoring applications receiving first consideration for funding.

(2) *Guaranteed loan only awards.* Considering the availability of funds, the Agency will fund those guaranteed loan only applications that score the highest compared to the scores of other applications, with higher scoring

applications receiving first consideration for funding.

(3) *Evaluation criteria.* Agency personnel will score each application based on the evaluation criteria specified in 7 CFR 4280.117(c), 7 CFR 4280.129(c), 7 CFR 4280.178, or 7 CFR 4280.192, as applicable.

For hybrid applications, each technical report will be evaluated and scored based on its own merit. The scores for the technologies will be consolidated using a weighted average approach based on the percentage of the cost for each system to the total eligible project cost.

Example: A hybrid project contains a wind and solar photovoltaic components. The wind system will cost \$30,000 (75 percent of total eligible project cost) and the solar will cost \$10,000 (25 percent of total eligible project cost). The wind technical report was evaluated and assigned a total score of 22 points, while the solar report was evaluated and assigned a total score of 31 points. In this scenario, the final technical score would be assigned as follows: $(22 \times 75 \text{ percent}) + (31 \times 25 \text{ percent}) = 24.25$.

(4) *Applications that receive the same score.* If applications score the same and if remaining funds are insufficient to fund each such application, the Agency may distribute the remaining funds to a lower scoring application. Before this occurs, the Agency will provide the applicant of the higher scoring application the opportunity to reduce the amount of the applicant's grant request to the amount of funds available. If the applicant agrees to lower its grant request, the applicant must certify that the purposes of the project will be met and provide the remaining total funds needed to complete the project. At its discretion, the Agency may also elect to allow the remaining funds to be carried over to the next fiscal year rather than selecting a lower scoring application or distributing funds on a pro-rata basis.

VI. Administration Information

A. Notifications

(1) *Applicants.* The notification provisions of 7 CFR 4280.111 apply to this Notice.

(2) *Lenders.* The notification provisions of 7 CFR 4280.129(a) apply to this Notice.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

(1) *Exception authority.* The provisions of 7 CFR 4280.104 apply to this Notice.

(2) *Appeals.* A person may seek a review of an Agency decision or appeal to the National Appeals Division in accordance with 7 CFR 4280.105.

(3) *Conflict of interest.* The provisions of 7 CFR 4280.106 apply to this Notice.

(4) *USDA Departmental Regulations and other laws that contains other compliance requirements.* The provisions of 7 CFR 4280.107 and 7 CFR 4280.108 apply to this Notice.

VII. Agency Contacts

For assistance on this program, please contact a USDA Rural Development Energy Coordinator, as provided in the **ADDRESSES** section of this Notice.

VIII. Nondiscrimination Statement

USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

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

Dated: January 11, 2012.

Judith A. Canales,

Administrator, Rural Business-Cooperative Service.

[FR Doc. 2012-755 Filed 1-19-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-XY-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Business-Cooperative Service

Notice of Stakeholder Meetings on Rural Energy for America Program

AGENCY: Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: The Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS) will hold meetings for stakeholders focusing on Rural Development's Rural Energy for America Program implemented under the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) during the first quarter of calendar year 2012. These meetings will be hosted by Rural

Development State Directors. Stakeholders must contact the appropriate Rural Development State Office in order to participate.

DATES: The stakeholder meetings will be held during the first quarter of calendar year 2012. Please contact the Rural Development State Office for your State, as identified in the **ADDRESSES** section of this Notice, for the specific date and time.

ADDRESSES: RBS intends to hold the stakeholder meetings at Rural Development's State Offices. To confirm the location of the meeting for your State, please contact the applicable USDA Rural Development Energy Coordinator for your State. These Energy Coordinators are listed below.

Rural Development Energy Coordinators

Note: Telephone numbers listed are not toll-free.

Alabama

Marcia Johnson, USDA Rural Development, Sterling Centre, Suite 601, 4121 Carmichael Road, Montgomery, AL 36106-3683, (334) 279-3453, marcia.johnson@al.usda.gov.

Alaska

Chad Stovall, USDA Rural Development, 800 West Evergreen, Suite 201, Palmer, AK 99645-6539, (907) 761-7718, chad.stovall@ak.usda.gov.

American Samoa (See Hawaii)

Arizona

Gary Mack, USDA Rural Development, 230 North First Avenue, Suite 206, Phoenix, AZ 85003-1706, (602) 280-8717, Gary.Mack@az.usda.gov.

Arkansas

Laura Tucker, USDA Rural Development, 700 West Capitol Avenue, Room 3416, Little Rock, AR 72201-3225, (501) 301-3280, Laura.Tucker@ar.usda.gov.

California

Philip Brown, USDA Rural Development, 430 G Street, #4169, Davis, CA 95616, (530) 792-5811, Phil.brown@ca.usda.gov.

Colorado

Janice Pond, USDA Rural Development, Denver Federal Center, Building 56, Room 2300, P.O. Box 25426, Denver, CO 80225-0426, (720) 544-2907, Janice.pond@co.usda.gov.