

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

Notice of Solicitation of Applications for Rural Water and Wastewater Technical Assistance and Training Program for Fiscal Year 2023

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Utilities Service

ACTION: Notice

SUMMARY: The Rural Utilities Service (RUS or the Agency), a Rural Development agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), announces the acceptance of applications under the Rural Water and Wastewater Technical Assistance and Training (TAT) Program for Fiscal Year 2023. The TAT Program is designed to help qualified, private nonprofit organizations provide technical assistance and training to identify and evaluate solutions to water and waste problems, help communities prepare applications for water and waste disposal loans and grants, assist with improving the management, operation, maintenance and sustainability of water and waste facilities in eligible rural areas, address contamination of drinking and surface water supplies by emerging contaminants, and pay certain expenses associated with the provision of such services. All applicants are responsible for any expenses incurred in developing their applications.

ADDRESSES: All applicants must file their application electronically through <https://www.grants.gov>.

Instructions and additional resources, to include an Application Guide, are available at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-environmental->

[programs/water-waste-disposal-technical-assistance-training-grants](#), under the “To Apply” tab.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions about this announcement can be directed to Lorrie Davis, Community Programs Specialist, Water and Environmental Programs, RUS, USDA, by email at Water-RD@usda.gov or (202) 720-1938. Persons with disabilities that require alternative means for communication should contact the USDA Target Center at (202) 720–2600 (voice).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Overview

Federal Awarding Agency Name. Rural Utilities Service, USDA

Funding Opportunity Title. Rural Water and Wastewater Technical Assistance and Training Program for Fiscal Year 2023

Announcement Type. Solicitation of Applications

Funding Opportunity. TATFY23

Assistance Listing. 10.761

Dates. Completed electronic applications and supporting materials must be filed through <https://www.grants.gov/> by 11:59 pm Eastern Time (ET) on December 31, 2022. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Rural Development Key Priorities. The Agency encourages applicants to consider projects that will advance the following key priorities (more details available at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/priority-points>):

- Assisting rural communities recover economically through more and better market opportunities and through improved infrastructure.

- Ensuring all rural residents have equitable access to Rural Development (RD) programs and benefits from RD funded projects; and
- Reducing climate pollution and increasing resilience to the impacts of climate change through economic support to rural communities.

A. Program Description

1. *Purpose of the Program.* The TAT Program is designed to help qualified, private nonprofit organizations provide technical assistance and training to identify and evaluate solutions to water and waste problems, help communities prepare applications for water and waste disposal loans and grants, assist with improving the management, operation, maintenance and sustainability of water and waste facilities in eligible rural areas, address contamination of drinking and surface water supplies by emerging contaminants, and pay certain expenses associated with the provision of such services.
2. *Statutory and Regulatory Authority.* Section 306(a)(14) authorizes the TAT Program (see [7 U.S.C. 1926\(a\)\(14\)](#), as amended, the “ConAct”). The TAT Grant Program is implemented by [7 CFR part 1775](#), Technical Assistance Grants. Other Federal statutes and regulations are listed at [7 CFR §1775.8](#), Other Federal statutes.
3. *Definitions.* The definitions applicable to this notice are published at [7 CFR §1775.2](#), Definitions.
4. *Application of Awards.* The Agency will review, evaluate, and score applications received in response to this notice based on 7 CFR §1775.11, Priority, and awards are based on those criteria. The Agency advises all interested parties that the applicant bears the full burden in preparing and submitting an application in response to this notice regardless of whether or not funding is appropriated for the TAT Program in FY 2023.

B. Federal Award Information

Type of Award. Grants

Fiscal Year Funds. FY 2023

Available Funds. Dependent upon FY 2023 appropriations. Funding is anticipated to be approximately \$35,000,000 and of this amount, a minimum of \$1,000,000 may be set-aside for applications directed at Technical Assistance and Training for purposes that support improved sustainability of water and waste services related to manufactured homes. An announcement on the [Rural Development Federal Funding Opportunities website](#) will identify the available funds in FY 2023 for TAT applications.

Award Amounts. No minimum or maximum award amount

Anticipated Award Date. June 2023

Performance Period. October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024

Renewal or Supplemental Awards. With the submission of a new application, existing projects are eligible to compete with applications for new Federal awards.

Type of Assistance Instrument. Grant Agreement

C. Eligibility Information

1. *Eligible Applicants.* Eligible applicants must meet the eligibility requirements of [7 CFR §1775.35](#), Eligibility.
2. *Cost Sharing or Matching.* There are no cost sharing or matching requirements associated with this grant.
3. *Other.* All submitted proposals must meet the intent outlined in [7 CFR §1775.33](#), Objectives. To be determined an eligible project, grant requests must be made for the purposes listed within [7 CFR §1775.36](#), Purpose.

D. Application and Submission Information

1. *Address to Request Application Package.* The FY 2023 TAT Program Application Guide, copies of necessary forms and samples, and the TAT Program regulation are available at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-environmental-programs/water-waste-disposal-technical-assistance-training-grants>. Application information is also available at <https://www.grants.gov/>.
2. *Content and Form of Application Submission.* Carefully review this notice, [7 CFR part 1775](#), and FY 2023 TAT Program Application Guide, which collectively detail all required items for a complete application. The Agency will not solicit or consider new scoring or eligibility information that is submitted after the application deadline; however, the Agency reserves the right to contact applicants to seek clarification on materials contained in the submitted application. See the FY 2023 TAT Application Guide for a full discussion of each required item. For requirements of completed grant applications, refer to [7 CFR §1775.10](#), Applications. The items at §1775.10(c)(3), (4), and (5) are no longer required to be separately submitted as part of the application as they are covered under System for Award Management and Unique Entity Identifier. The application and any materials sent with it become Federal records by law and cannot be returned to you.
3. *System for Award Management and Unique Entity Identifier.*
 - (a) At the time of application, each applicant must have an active registration in the System for Award Management (SAM) before submitting its application in accordance with [2 CFR part 25](#), Universal Identifier and System for Award Management. To register

in SAM, entities will be required to create Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). Instructions for obtaining the UEI are available at <https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration>.

(b) Each applicant must maintain an active SAM registration, with current, accurate and complete information, at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application under consideration by a Federal awarding agency.

(c) Each applicant must ensure they complete the Financial Assistance General Certifications and Representations in SAM.

(d) Applicants must provide a valid UEI in its application, unless determined exempt under [2 CFR §25.110](#), Exceptions.

(e) The Agency will not make an award until the applicant has complied with all SAM requirements including providing the UEI. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Agency is ready to make an award, the Agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

4. *Submission Dates and Times.* Applications and supporting information must be submitted electronically and be received by www.grants.gov no later than 11:59 p.m., ET, on December 31, 2022, to be eligible for FY 2023 funding. If the submission deadline falls on Saturday, Sunday, or a federal holiday, the application is due the next business day. Late or incomplete applications will not be eligible for FY 2023 grant funding.

5. *Funding Restrictions.* Applications must be for eligible purposes as defined above, and must comply with the grant fund limitations found within [7 CFR §1775.5](#), Limitations.

6. *Other Submission Requirements.* Applications and supporting information will not be accepted via, fax, electronic mail, or any other medium other than through

www.Grants.gov.

E. Application Review Information

1. *Criteria.* All applications that are complete and eligible will be scored and ranked competitively. The categories for scoring criteria used are the following:

Criteria No.	Criteria	Points
1	Applicant Status:	
	National Organization	10 points
	Multi-State Organization	5 points
	Single-State / Area Organization	2 points
2	Applicant experience at developing and implementing successful technical assistance and/or training programs:	
	More than ten years	5 points
	Six to ten years	2 points
	Up to five years	1 point
3	Applicant resources – organizational staff versus contract personnel to carry out the technical assistance and/or training:	
	At least 75% staff	10 points
	50% to 74.99% staff	5 points
	Less than 50% staff* (See Regulatory Requirement)	Ineligible
4	Population of proposed area(s) to be served:	
	Less than 2,500	Up to 15 points
	Less than 5,500	Up to 10 points
	5,500 or more	0 points
5	Median Household Income (MHI) of proposed area(s) to be served (based on American Community Survey data from 2006-2010 5-year period):	
	Less than 80% of the State Non-metropolitan Median Household Income (SNMHI)	Up to 10 points
	80% to 100% of the SNMHI	Up to 5 points
	More than 100% of the SNMHI	0 points
6	Project Duration:	

	Projects providing technical assistance and/or training that accomplish the objective within a 12 month or less time frame	5 points
	Over 12 months	0 points
7	Needs Assessment - The problem/issue(s) being addressed is clearly defined, supported by data, and addresses the need.	Up to 15 points
8	Goals and objectives are clearly defined, tied to the need as defined in the work plan, and are measurable.	Up to 15 points
9	Work plan - Clearly articulates a well thought out approach to accomplishing objectives; clearly identifies who will be served by project.	Up to 40 points
10	Actual assistance provided: (Projects using multiple methods may receive a maximum total score of 30 points for this criterion):	Up to 30 points
	Applicant is providing “hands on” technical assistance and/or training primarily to water and waste systems managers/operators.	10 points and/or
	Applicant is providing technical assistance primarily through the distribution of educational materials and other outreach methods.	10 points and/or
	Applicant is providing technical assistance through a demonstration project.	5 points and/or
	Applicant is providing technical assistance to address the contamination of drinking water and surface water supplies by emerging contaminants, including per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and/or water reuse strategies.	5 points and/or
11	Evaluation methods are specific to the activity, clearly defined, measurable, with expected project outcomes.	Up to 20 points
12	In-Kind Support:	
	Demonstrated commitment of non-federal resources of more than 25% of total budget.	10 points
	Demonstrated commitment of non-federal resources 10- 25% of total budget.	5 points

	Less than 10% of non-federal resources.	0 points
13	Sustainability: Applicant demonstrates ability to sustain project without federal award using a thorough financial analysis to include: cash on hand, projected revenues, outside source contributions, and show a steady increase to sustainability within 5 years.	Up to 10 points
14	Administrator Discretion: RUS Administrator may provide additional points based on the following factors: geographic, economic, agency priority issues.**	Up to 15 points

* [7 CFR §1775.35](#), Eligibility - (e) (3) Applicants may contract with a nonaffiliated organization for not more than 49 percent of the grant to provide the proposed assistance.

RUS's definition of an affiliated organization is as follows:

In corporate law and taxes, an affiliate is a company that is related to another company, usually by being in the position of a member or a subordinate role (must be verified by organizational documentation). Two companies may be affiliated if one company has control over the other or if both are controlled by a third company. One corporation can be affiliated with another corporation by shareholdings, by holding a minority interest, or one corporation might be a subsidiary of another.

**Administrative Points – In order to be considered for Administrative Points, the applicant's work plan must include a separate section titled: "Administrative Points." In this section, the TAT Program applicant will address one or more of the following factors:

- Assist rural communities recover economically through more and better market opportunities and through improved infrastructure. Applicant may receive priority points if the direct technical assistance to a project is located in or serving one of the

top 10% of counties or county equivalents based upon county risk score in the United States. The website, <https://www.rd.usda.gov/priority-points>, has the data to confirm if your location qualifies or not. (5 points)

- Ensure all rural residents have equitable access to RD programs and benefits from RD funded projects. Direct technical assistance to a project located in or serving a community with a score 0.75 or above on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Social Vulnerability Index. The website, <https://www.rd.usda.gov/priority-points>, has the data to confirm if your location qualifies or not. (5 points)
- Reduce climate pollution and increase resilience to the impacts of climate change through economic support to rural communities. Direct technical assistance to a project may receive points through one of two options. The website, <https://www.rd.usda.gov/priority-points>, has the options and data to confirm if your location qualifies or not. (5 points)

The administrative points will be awarded solely on the aforementioned factors, up to a total of 15 points.

2. *Review and Selection Process.* RUS will acknowledge the application's receipt via an email to the applicant. The following actions will be taken:

(a) Incomplete or ineligible applications as of the deadline for submission will not be considered. If an application is determined to be incomplete or ineligible, the applicant will be notified in writing.

(b) Complete, eligible applications will be evaluated competitively by a review team, composed of at least two RUS employees selected from the Water Programs

Division. They will make overall recommendations based on the program elements found in 7 CFR part 1775 and the review criteria presented in this notice. They will award points as described in the scoring criteria in 7 CFR §1775.11, Priority, and this notice. Each application will receive a score based on the averages of the reviewers' scores and discretionary points awarded by the RUS Administrator. RUS reserves the right to request additional information once an application is determined to be complete to minimize the risk of duplication of other federal efforts.

(c) Applications will be ranked, and grants awarded based upon the scoring results and funding availability. At RUS's discretion, projects scoring too low may not be awarded funding even if funding remains available.

(d) Regardless of the score an application receives, if RUS determines that the project is technically infeasible, RUS will notify the applicant, in writing, and no further action will be taken.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

1. Federal Award Notices.

(a) *Application Outcomes.* There are four possible outcomes following the submission of an application under the TAT Program. RUS reserves the right to make no grant awards if all applications are ineligible, incomplete or do not meet the established program objectives and priorities. RUS may determine that the application is:

- (1) Eligible and selected for funding,
- (2) Eligible but offered fewer funds than requested,
- (3) Eligible but not selected for funding, or
- (4) Ineligible for the grant.

(b) *Award Notices.* Applicants selected for funding will be sent an award letter, accompanied by a grant agreement, which outlines the terms and conditions of the award and other applicable documents. Pursuant to the grant agreement, grant funds may be released over the course of the grant period in reimbursement for the performance of eligible, approved activities which do not duplicate similar federal efforts or tasks. The grant agreement may also include reporting and pre-approval requirements consistent with [7 CFR part 1775](#) which if not met, may result in a delay in reimbursement, disallowance of expense, or a suspension of the grant.

(c) *Payments/Reimbursements.* Grantees will be reimbursed as delineated at [7 CFR §1775.18](#), Fund disbursement, and the Grant Agreement.

(d) *Scope of Services.* Any change in the scope of the project, budget adjustments of more than 10 percent, or other modifications must get written prior approval in accordance with [7 CFR §1775.19](#), Grant cancellation or major changes, and the Grant Agreement.

(e) *Prevailing Wages.* All laborers, apprentices and mechanics employed by contractors and subcontractors on projects funded directly by or assisted in whole or in part by and through the Federal Government pursuant to the ConAct shall be paid wages at rates not less than those prevailing on projects of a character similar in the locality as determined by the Secretary of Labor in accordance with subchapter IV of chapter 31 of title 40, United States Code. Further details on eligible applicants and projects may be found in the relevant regulations listed in Section C.

2. *Administrative and National Policy Requirements.* There are no known unusual Administrative and National Policy Requirements associated with the TAT Program.

3. *Reporting.* Performance reporting, including applicable forms, narratives, and other documentation, are to be completed and submitted in accordance with the provisions of 7 CFR §1775.20, Reporting, and the Grant Agreement. Further, all grantees must submit an audit or financial information covering the defined period of performance as outlined in 7 CFR §1775.21, Audit or financial statements, and the Grant Agreement.

G. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

For general questions about this announcement, please contact Lorrie Davis at Water-RD@usda.gov or 202-720-1938. Program website also provide up to date contact information at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-environmental-programs/water-waste-disposal-technical-assistance-training-grants>.

H. Other Information

Paperwork Reduction Act

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), the information collection requirements associated with the programs, as covered in this notice, have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under OMB Control Number 0572-0112.

National Environmental Policy Act

All recipients under this Notice are subject to the requirements of 7 CFR part 1970, Environmental Policies and Procedures. However, awards for technical assistance and training under this Notice are classified as a Categorical Exclusion according to 7 CFR §1970.53(b), CEs involving no or minimal disturbance without an environmental report, and usually do not require any additional documentation. RUS will review each grant application to determine its compliance with 7 CFR part 1970. The applicant may

be asked to provide additional information or documentation to assist RUS with this determination.

Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act

All applicants, in accordance with 2 CFR part 25, must be registered in SAM and have a UEI number as stated in Section D(3) of this notice. All recipients of Federal financial assistance are required to report information about first-tier sub-awards and executive total compensation in accordance with 2 CFR part 170, Reporting subaward and executive compensation information.

Civil Rights Act

All grants made under this notice are subject to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as required by the USDA ([7 CFR part 15, subpart A](#) - Nondiscrimination in Federally-Assisted Programs of the Department of Agriculture - Effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, Title IX, Executive Order 13166 (Limited English Proficiency), Executive Order 11246, and the Equal Credit Opportunity Act of 1974.

Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights laws and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Mission Areas, agencies, staff offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any

program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs).

Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language) should contact the responsible Mission Area, agency, or staff office; the USDA TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY); or the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, which can be obtained online at <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/usda-program-discrimination-complaint-form.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

(1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

1400 Independence Avenue, SW

Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

(2) Fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

(3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov

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