

April 15, 2021

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chair, Appropriations Senate Subcommittee
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, and Food & Drug Admin.

The Honorable John Hoeven
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, and Food & Drug Admin.

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
Chair, House Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, and Food & Drug Admin.

The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry
Ranking Member, House Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, and Food & Drug Admin.

Dear Chairwoman Baldwin, Ranking Member Hoeven, Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Fortenberry:

On behalf of our hundreds of cooperative members across rural America, we write to you respectfully requesting full funding of the Rural Cooperative Development Grant program, including no less than \$15 million be provided in Fiscal Year 2022 for technical assistance development grants. This program is the sole domestic program dedicated to economic and community development using the cooperative business model, which has been a critical tool in rural America for more than a century.

Last year alone, Rural Cooperative Development Grants supported business and community development through projects such as:

- Food hubs, distribution, and processing centers;
- Food access through retail grocery, purchasing, and shared services cooperatives;
- Affordable cooperative housing for agriculture labor and rural workforce;
- Childcare & home health care cooperatives; and,
- Preserving existing businesses through cooperative conversions

In rural communities across the country, people use cooperatives to own, control and benefit from their work in nearly every sector of the U.S. economy. RCDG has been instrumental to providing the technical assistance necessary to help preserve existing businesses, support innovation and growth. In the last ten years, the Rural Co-op Development Grant has helped to support more than 500 cooperative businesses and over 10,000 jobs across all 50 states.

As businesses and communities continue to weather and recover from the economic impacts of COVID-19, cooperatives are a time tested and shovel-ready solution to create opportunity and build a more stable and resilient local economy. Thank you for your consideration of this request for no less than \$15 million for Rural Cooperative Development technical assistance grants.

In cooperation,

CooperationWorks
Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund
National Cooperative Business Association CLUSA
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Farmers Union
U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives