

Rural Utilities Service, USDA

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it will be used to determine the proposed project's priority for available funds.

(b) *State Office review.* All applications will be reviewed and scored for funding priority using RUS Bulletin 1778-1. The State Program Official will request funds from the National Office, Attention: Assistant Administrator, Water and Waste, using RUS Bulletins 1778-1 and 1778-2. If an application cannot be funded, the State Program Official will be notified. Eligible applicants that cannot be funded should be advised that funds are not available.

(c) *National Office review.* Each year all funding requests will be reviewed by the National Office starting November 1 and will continue as long as funds are available except for the first year in which funds are made available for this grant program. A review of funding requests the first year will start 30 days after funds are made available. Projects selected for funding will be considered based on the priority criteria and available funds. Projects must compete on a national basis for available funds, and the National Office will allocate funds to State offices on a project by project basis.

(d) *Selection priorities.* The priorities described below will be used by the State Program Official to rate applications and by the Assistant Administrator of Water and Waste to select projects for funding. Points will be distributed as indicated in paragraphs (d)(1) through (d)(5) of this section and will be considered in selecting projects for funding. A copy of RUS Bulletins 1778-1 and 1778-2 used to rate applications, should be placed in the case file for future reference.

(1) *Population.* The proposed project will serve an area with a rural population:

- (i) Not in excess of 1,500—30 points.
- (ii) More than 1,500 and not in excess of 3,000—20 points.
- (iii) More than 3,000 and not in excess of 5,000—15 points.

(2) *Income.* The median household income of population to be served by the proposed project is:

- (i) Not in excess of 70% of the statewide nonmetropolitan median household income—30 points.

- (ii) More than 70% and not in excess of 80% of the statewide nonmetropolitan median household income—20 points.

- (iii) More than 80% and not in excess of 90% of the statewide nonmetropolitan median household income—10 points.

- (iv) Over 90% of the statewide nonmetropolitan median household income—0 points.

(3) *Significant decline.* Points will only be assigned for one of the following paragraphs when the primary purpose of the proposed project is to correct a significant decline in the:

- (i) Quantity of water available from private individually owned wells or other individual sources of water—30 points; or

- (ii) Quantity of water available from an established system's source of water—20 points; or

- (iii) Quality of water available from private individually owned wells or other individual sources of water—30 points; or

- (iv) Quality of water available from an established system's source of water—20 points.

(4) *Acute shortage.* Grants made in accordance with §1778.11(b) to assist an established water system remedy an acute shortage of quality water or correct a significant decline in the quantity or quality of water that is available—10 points.

(5) *Discretionary.* In certain cases the Administrator may assign up to 30 points for items such as geographic distribution of funds, rural residents hauling water, severe contamination levels, etc.

§ 1778.8 [Reserved]

§ 1778.9 Uses.

Grant funds may be used for the following purposes:

- (a) Waterline extensions from existing systems.

- (b) Construction of new waterlines.

- (c) Repairs to an existing system.

- (d) Significant maintenance to an existing system.

- (e) Construction of new wells, reservoirs, transmission lines, treatment plants, and other sources of water.

- (f) Equipment replacement.

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(g) Connection and/or tap fees.

(h) Pay costs that were incurred within six months of the date an application was filed with the Agency to correct an emergency situation that would have been eligible for funding under this part.

(i) Any other appropriate purpose such as legal fees, engineering fees, recording costs, environmental impact analyses, archaeological surveys, possible salvage or other mitigation measures, planning, establishing or acquiring rights associated with developing sources of, treating, storing, or distributing water.

(j) Assist rural water systems to comply with the requirements of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 *et seq.*) (FWPCA) or the SDWA when such failure to comply is directly related to a recent decline in quality of potable water. This would not apply to changes in the requirements of FWPCA or SDWA.

§ 1778.10 Restrictions.

(a) Grant funds may not be used to:

(1) Assist any city or town with a population in excess of 10,000 inhabitants according to the most recent decennial census of the United States.

(2) Assist a rural area that has a median household income in excess of the statewide nonmetropolitan median household income according to the most recent decennial census of the United States.

(3) Finance facilities which are not modest in size, design, cost, and are not directly related to correcting the potable water quantity or quality problem.

(4) Pay loan or grant finder's fees.

(5) Pay any annual recurring costs that are considered to be operational expenses.

(6) Pay rental for the use of equipment or machinery owned by the rural community.

(7) Purchase existing systems.

(8) Refinance existing indebtedness, except for short-term debt incurred in accordance with § 1778.9(h).

(9) Make reimbursement for projects developed with other grant funds.

(10) Finance facilities that are not for public use.

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(b) Nothing in paragraph (a)(1) of this section shall preclude rural areas from submitting joint proposals for assistance under this part. Each entity applying for financial assistance under this part to fund their share of a joint project will be considered individually.

§ 1778.11 Maximum grants.

(a) Grants made to alleviate a significant decline in quantity or quality of water available from the water supplies in rural areas that occurred within two years of filing an application with the Agency cannot exceed \$500,000.

(b) Grants made for repairs, partial replacement, or significant maintenance on an established system to remedy an acute shortage or significant decline in the quality or quantity of potable water cannot exceed \$75,000.

(c) Grants under this part, subject to paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section, shall be made for 100 percent of eligible project costs.

§ 1778.12 [Reserved]

§ 1778.13 Set-aside.

(a) At least 70 percent of all grants made under these grant programs shall be for projects funded in accordance with § 1778.11(a).

(b) At least 50 percent of the funds appropriated for this grant program shall be allocated to rural areas with populations not in excess of 3,000 inhabitants according to the most recent decennial census of the United States.

§ 1778.14 Other considerations.

(a) *Civil rights compliance requirements.* All grants made under this part are subject to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d *et seq.*), as outlined in subpart E of part 1901 of this title.

(b) *Environmental requirements.* All projects must have appropriate environmental reviews in accordance with RUS requirements.

(c) *Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act* (42 U.S.C. 4601 *et seq.*) All projects must comply with the requirements set forth in 7 CFR part 21.

(d) *Flood and mudslide hazard area precautions.* If the project is located in a flood or mudslide area, then flood or