

PART 1700—GENERAL INFORMATION

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AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 301, 552; 7 U.S.C. 901 *et seq.*, 1921 *et seq.*, 6941 *et seq.*; 7 CFR 2.7.

SOURCE: 63 FR 16085, Apr. 2, 1998, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—General

§ 1700.1 General.

(a) The Rural Electrification Administration (REA) was established by Executive Order No. 7037 on May 11, 1935. Statutory authority was provided by the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (RE Act) (7 U.S.C. 901). The RE Act established REA as a lending agency with responsibility for developing a program for rural electrification.

(b) On October 28, 1949, the RE Act was amended to authorize REA to make loans to improve and extend telephone service in rural areas. The Rural Telephone Bank (RTB), an agency of the United States, was established by amendment to the RE Act, approved

May 7, 1971. The Administrator of RUS serves as the Bank's chief executive with the title of Governor.

(c) The Secretary of Agriculture (Secretary) established the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) on October 20, 1994, pursuant to the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994, (7 U.S.C. 6941 *et seq.*). RUS was assigned responsibility for administering electric and telecommunications loan and loan guarantee programs previously administered by REA, including programs of the Rural Telephone Bank (RTB), and water and waste loans and grants previously administered by the Rural Development Administration, along with other functions as the Secretary determined appropriate. The rights, interests, obligations, duties, and contracts previously vested in REA were transferred to, and vested in RUS.

§ 1700.2 Availability of information.

(a) The offices of RUS are located in the South Building of the United States Department of Agriculture at 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-1500. Hours of operation are from 8:15 AM to 4:45 PM, Eastern time on Federal Government business days.

(b) Information about RUS is available for public inspection and copying as required by the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552 *et seq.* Information about availability and costs of agency publications and other agency materials is available from the Director, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, Rural Utilities Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Room 4034-S, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, STOP 1522, Washington, DC 20250-1522. Phone 202-720-0736. FAX 202-720-4120.

(c) RUS issues indexes of publications in conformance with the Freedom of Information Act and Department of Agriculture regulations at 7 CFR part 1. Many RUS issuances, including regulations, delegations of authority for headquarters and field staff, and other documents, are available on the world wide web at <http://www.usda.gov/rus>. Single hard copies of publications, forms, forms of basic loan and security instruments, and other materials are available either directly from RUS,

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from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington DC 20402, or from another source as identified. Costs for these publications are established in conformance with 7 CFR part 1.

§ 1700.3 Requests under the Freedom of Information Act.

Department of Agriculture procedures for requests for official records under the Freedom of Information Act are found at 7 CFR part 1. Requests must be in writing and may be submitted in person or by mail to United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Room 0164-S, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, STOP 0742, Washington, DC 20250-0742; or by FAX to 202-720-1915. As set forth in 7 CFR 1.16, fees may be charged for processing of requests for records. An appeal of the agency determination concerning the request for official records shall be made in writing to the Administrator, Rural Utilities Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Room 4051-S, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, STOP 1510, Washington, DC 20250-1500.

§ 1700.4 Public comments on proposed rules.

RUS requires that all persons submitting comments to a proposed rule or other document published by the agency in the FEDERAL REGISTER submit, in hard copy, a signed original and three copies of their comments to the address shown in the preamble to the proposed rule. Copies of comments submitted are available to the public in conformance with 7 CFR part 1.

§§ 1700.5-1700.24 [Reserved]

Subpart B—Agency Organization and Functions

§ 1700.25 Office of the Administrator.

The Administrator, who also serves as Governor of the RTB, is appointed by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Under Secretary, Rural Development delegated to the Administrator, in 7 CFR part 2, responsibility for administering the programs and activities of RUS and RTB. The Administrator is aided directly by Deputy Administrators and

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by Assistant Administrators for the electric program, telecommunications program, the water and environmental programs, and program accounting and regulatory analysis, and by other staff offices. The work of the agency is carried out as described in this part.

§ 1700.26 Deputy Administrators.

Deputy Administrators aid and assist the Administrator. The Deputy Administrator, Program Policy and Telecommunications, provides overall policy direction to all RUS programs and directs and coordinates the telecommunications programs. The Deputy Administrator, Water and Environmental Programs, directs and coordinates the agency's water and waste disposal programs. The Deputy Administrators review agency policies in these areas and, as necessary, implement changes, and participate with the Administrator and other officials in planning and formulating the programs and activities of the agency, including the making and servicing of loans and grants.

§ 1700.27 Electric Program.

RUS, through the Electric Program, makes loans and loan guarantees for rural electrification and the furnishing of electric service to persons in rural areas.

(a) *The Assistant Administrator, Electric Program*, directs and coordinates the rural electrification programs, participating with the Administrator, and others, in planning and formulating the programs and activities of the agency, and performs other activities as the Administrator may prescribe from time to time.

(b) *Primary point of contact with borrowers.* Two regional divisions, one for the Northern Region and one for the Southern Region, are the primary points of contact between RUS and its electric distribution borrowers. Each office administers the rural electric program for its assigned geographical area through headquarters staff and general field representatives. The Power Supply Division is the primary point of contact between RUS and its electric power supply borrowers.