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7 CFR Ch. XVII (1-1-05 Edition)

(iii) The purchase of existing facilities when it is necessary either to improve service or prevent the loss of service;

(iv) Refinancing debts incurred by, or on behalf of, an applicant when all of the following conditions exist:

(A) The debts being refinanced are a secondary part of the total loan;

(B) The debts were incurred for the facility or service being financed or any part thereof; and

(C) Arrangements cannot be made with the creditors to extend or modify the terms of the debts so that a sound basis will exist for making a loan; and

(v) Prepayment of costs for which RUS grant funds were obligated.

(3) Grant funds may be used to restore loan funds used to prepay grant obligated costs.

(f) Construction incurred before loan or grant approval.

(1) Funds may be used to pay obligations for eligible project costs incurred before loan or grant approval if such requests are made in writing by the applicant and the Agency determines that:

(i) Compelling reasons exist for incurring obligations before loan or grant approval;

(ii) The obligations will be incurred for authorized loan or grant purposes; and

(iii) The Agency's authorization to pay such obligations is on the condition that it is not committed to make the loan or grant; it assumes no responsibility for any obligations incurred by the applicant; and the applicant must subsequently meet all loan or grant approval requirements, including environmental and contracting requirements.

(2) If construction is started without Agency approval, post-approval in accordance with this section may be considered, provided the construction meets applicable requirements including those regarding approval and environmental matters.

(g) Water or sewer service may be provided through individual installations or small clusters of users within an applicant's service area. The approval official should consider items such as: quantity and quality of the individual installations that may be de-

veloped; cost effectiveness of the individual facility compared with the initial and long term user cost on a central system; health and pollution problems attributable to individual facilities; operational or management problems peculiar to individual installations; and permit and regulatory agency requirements.

(1) Applicants providing service through individual facilities must meet the eligibility requirements in §1780.7.

(2) The Agency must approve the form of agreement between the applicant and individual users for the installation, operation, maintenance and payment for individual facilities.

(3) If taxes or assessments are not pledged as security, applicants providing service through individual facilities must obtain security necessary to assure collection of any sum the individual user is obligated to pay the applicant.

(4) Notes representing indebtedness owed the applicant by a user for an individual facility will be scheduled for payment over a period not to exceed the useful life of the individual facility or the RUS loan, whichever is shorter. The interest rate will not exceed the interest rate charged the applicant on the RUS indebtedness.

(5) Applicants providing service through individual or cluster facilities must obtain:

(i) Easements for the installation and ingress to and egress from the facility if determined necessary by RUS; and

(ii) An adequate method for denying service in the event of nonpayment of user fees.

§ 1780.10 Limitations.

(a) Loan and grant funds may not be used to finance:

(1) Facilities which are not modest in size, design, and cost;

(2) Loan or grant finder's fees;

(3) The construction of any new combined storm and sanitary sewer facilities;

(4) Any portion of the cost of a facility which does not serve a rural area;

(5) That portion of project costs normally provided by a business or industrial user, such as wastewater pretreatment, etc.;

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(6) Rental for the use of equipment or machinery owned by the applicant;

(7) For other purposes not directly related to operating and maintenance of the facility being installed or improved; and

(8) A judgment which would disqualify an applicant for a loan or grant as provided for in §1780.7(g).

(b) Grant funds may not be used to:

(1) Reduce EDU costs to a level less than similar system cost;

(2) Pay any costs of a project when the median household income of the service area is more than 100 percent of the nonmetropolitan median household income of the State;

(3) Pay project costs when other loan funding for the project is not at reasonable rates and terms; and

(4) Pay project costs when other funding is a guaranteed loan obtained in accordance with 7 CFR part 1779 of this title.

(c) Grants may not be made in excess of the following percentages of the RUS eligible project development costs. Facilities previously installed will not be considered in determining the development costs.

(1) 75 percent when the median household income of the service area is below the higher of the poverty line or 80% of the state nonmetropolitan median income and the project is necessary to alleviate a health or sanitary problem.

(2) 45 percent when the median household income of the service area exceeds the 80 percent requirements described in paragraph (c)(1) of this section but is not more than 100 percent of the statewide nonmetropolitan median household income.

(3) Applicants are advised that the percentages contained in paragraphs (c)(1) and (c)(2) of this section are maximum amounts and may be further limited due to availability of funds or the grant determination procedures contained in §1780.35 (b).

[62 FR 33478, June 19, 1997, as amended at 64 FR 29946, June 4, 1999; 66 FR 23151, May 8, 2001]

§ 1780.11 Service area requirements.

(a) All facilities financed under the provisions of this part shall be for public use. The facilities will be installed

so as to serve any potential user within the service area who desires service and can be feasibly and legally served. This does not preclude:

(1) Financing or constructing projects in phases when it is not practical to finance or construct the entire project at one time; and

(2) Financing or constructing facilities where it is not economically feasible to serve the entire area, provided economic feasibility is determined on the basis of the entire system and not by considering the cost of separate extensions to or parts thereof; the applicant publicly announces a plan for extending service to areas not initially receiving service from the system; and potential users located in the areas not to be initially served receive written notice from the applicant that service will not be provided until such time as it is economically feasible to do so.

(b) Should the Agency determine that inequities exist within the applicants service area for the same type service proposed (i.e., water or waste disposal) such inequities will be remedied by the applicant prior to loan or grant approval or included as part of the project. Inequities are defined as unjustified variations in availability, adequacy or quality of service. User rate schedules for portions of existing systems that were developed under different financing, rates, terms or conditions do not necessarily constitute inequities.

(c) Developers are normally expected to provide utility-type facilities in new or developing areas in compliance with appropriate State statutes. RUS financing will be considered to an eligible applicant only in such cases when failure to complete development would result in an adverse economic condition for the rural area (not the community being developed); the proposal is necessary to the success of a current area development plan; and loan repayment can be assured by:

(1) The applicant already having sufficient assured revenues to repay the loan; or

(2) Developers providing a bond or escrowed security deposit as a guarantee sufficient to meet expenses attributable to the area in question until a sufficient number of the building