

§ 1778.5

§ 1778.5 [Reserved]

§ 1778.6 Eligibility.

(a) Grants may be made to public bodies and private nonprofit corporations serving rural areas. Public bodies include counties, cities, townships, incorporated towns and villages, boroughs, authorities, districts, and other political subdivisions of a State. Public bodies also include Indian tribes on Federal and State reservations and other Federally recognized Indian Tribal groups in rural areas.

(b) In the case of grants made to alleviate a significant decline in quantity or quality of water available from the water supplies of rural residents, the applicant must demonstrate that the decline occurred within two years of the date the application was filed with the Agency. This would not apply to grants made for repairs, partial replacement, or significant maintenance on an established water system. In situations involving imminent decline, evidence must be presented to demonstrate that the decline is likely to occur within one year of the date the application is filed with the Agency.

§ 1778.7 Project priority.

Paragraph (d) of this section indicates items and conditions which must be considered in selecting applications for further development. When ranking eligible applications for consideration for limited funds, Agency officials must consider the priority items met by each application and the degree to which those priorities are met.

(a) *Applications.* The application and supporting information submitted with 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. 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 beginning 30 days after funds from the annual appropriation are made available to the Agency. Reviews will continue throughout the fiscal year as long as funds are avail-

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able. 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 Environmental Programs 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.
- (iv) Over 5,000—0 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 be assigned for only one of the following paragraphs when the primary purpose of the proposed project is to correct a significant decline that has occurred in the:

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