

§ 1780.16

7 CFR Ch. XVII (1-1-08 Edition)

§ 1780.16 [Reserved]

§ 1780.17 Selection priorities and process.

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. Points will be awarded as follows:

(a) *Population priorities.* (1) The proposed project will primarily serve a rural area having a population not in excess of 1,000—25 points;

(2) The proposed project primarily serves a rural area having a population between 1,001 and 2,500—15 points;

(3) The proposed project primarily serves a rural area having a population between 2,501 and 5,500—5 points.

(b) *Health priorities.* The proposed project is:

(1) Needed to alleviate an emergency situation, correct unanticipated diminution or deterioration of a water supply, or to meet Safe Drinking Water Act requirements which pertain to a water system—25 points;

(2) Required to correct inadequacies of a wastewater disposal system, or to meet health standards which pertain to a wastewater disposal system—25 points;

(3) Required to meet administrative orders issued to correct local, State, or Federal solid waste violations—15 points.

(c) *Median household income priorities.* The median household income of the population to be served by the proposed project is:

(1) Less than the poverty line if the poverty line is less than 80% of the statewide nonmetropolitan median household income—30 points;

(2) Less than 80 percent of the statewide nonmetropolitan median household income—20 points;

(3) Equal to or more than the poverty line and between 80% and 100%, inclusive, of the State's nonmetropolitan median household income—15 points.

(d) *Other priorities.* (1) The proposed project will: merge ownership, management, and operation of smaller facilities providing for more efficient management and economical service—15 points;

(2) The proposed project will enlarge, extend, or otherwise modify existing facilities to provide service to additional rural areas—10 points;

(3) Applicant is a public body or Indian tribe—5 points;

(4) Amount of other than RUS funds committed to the project is:

(i) 50% or more—15 points;

(ii) 20% to 49%—10 points;

(iii) 5%—19%—5 points;

(5) Projects that will serve Agency identified target areas—10 points;

(6) Projects that primarily recycle solid waste products thereby limiting the need for solid waste disposal—5 points;

(7) The proposed project will serve an area that has an unreliable quality or supply of drinking water—10 points.

(e) In certain cases the State program official may assign up to 15 points to a project. The points may be awarded to projects in order to improve compatibility and coordination between RUS's and other agencies' selection systems, to ensure effective RUS fund utilization, and to assist those projects that are the most cost effective. A written justification must be prepared and placed in the project file each time these points are assigned.

(f) *Cost overruns.* An application may receive consideration for funding before others at the State or National Office level when it is a subsequent request for a previously approved project which has encountered construction cost overruns. The cost overruns must be due to high bids or unexpected construction problems that cannot be reduced by negotiations, redesign, use of bid alternatives, rebidding or other means. Cost overruns exceeding 20% of the development cost at time of loan or grant approval or where the scope of the original purpose has changed will not be considered under this paragraph.

(g) *National office priorities.* In selecting projects for funding at the National Office level State program official points may or may not be considered. The Administrator may assign up to 15 additional points to account for items such as geographic distribution of funds, the highest priority projects within a state, and emergency conditions caused by economic problems or natural disasters. The Administrator

Rural Utilities Service, USDA

§ 1780.18

may delegate the authority to assign the 15 points to appropriate National Office staff.

§ 1780.18 Allocation of program funds.

(a) *General.* (1) The purpose of this part is to set forth the methodology and formulas by which the Administrator of the RUS allocates program funds to the States. (The term "State" means any of the States of the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, any territory or possession of the United States, or the Western Pacific Areas.)

(2) The formulas in this part are used to allocate program loan and grant funds to Rural Development State offices so that the overall mission of the Agency can be carried out. Considerations used when developing the formulas include enabling legislation, congressional direction, and administration policies. Allocation formulas ensure that program resources are available on an equal basis to all eligible individuals and organizations.

(3) The actual amounts of funds, as computed by the methodology and formulas contained herein, allocated to a State for a funding period, are distributed to each State office. The allocated amounts are available for review in any Rural Development State office.

(b) *Definitions*—(1) *Amount available for allocations.* Funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the Agency for use in authorized programs. On occasion, the allocation of funds to States may not be practical for a particular program due to funding or administrative constraints. In these cases, funds will be controlled by the National Office.

(2) *Basic formula criteria, data source and weight.* Basic formulas are used to

calculate a basic State factor as a part of the methodology for allocating funds to the States. The formulas take a number of criteria that reflect the funding needs for a particular program and through a normalization and weighting process for each of the criteria calculate the basic State factor (SF). The data sources used for each criteria are believed to be the most current and reliable information that adequately quantifies the criterion. The weight, expressed as a percentage, gives a relative value to the importance of each of the criteria.

(3) *Basic formula allocation.* The result of multiplying the amount available for allocation less the total of any amounts held in reserve or distributed by base or administrative allocation times the basic State factor for each State. The basic formula allocation (BFA) for an individual State is equal to:

$$BFA = (\text{Amount available for allocation} - \text{NO reserve} - \text{total base and administrative allocations}) \times SF.$$

(4) *Transition formula.* (i) A formula based on a proportional amount of previous year allocation used to maintain program continuity by preventing large fluctuations in individual State allocations. The transition formula limits allocation shifts to any particular State in the event of changes from year to year of the basic formula, the basic criteria, or the weights given the criteria. The transition formula first checks whether the current year's basic formula allocation is within the transition range (plus or minus 20 percentage points of the proportional amount of the previous year's BFA). The formula follows:

$$\text{Transition Range} = 1.0 + \frac{\text{maximum } 20\%}{100} \times \frac{(\text{Amount available for allocation this year} \times \text{State previous year BFA})}{(\text{Amount available for allocation previous year})}$$

(ii) If the current year's State BFA is not within the transition range in paragraph (b)(4)(i) of this section, the State formula allocation is changed to the amount of the transition range limit closest to the BFA amount. After

having performed this transition adjustment for each State, the sum of the funds allocated to all States will differ from the amount of funds available for BFA. This difference, whether a positive or negative amount, is distributed