

## Assistance Available for Energy-Efficient Upgrades to Agricultural Buildings

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 established the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), managed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

REAP uses grants to encourage energy-efficient and renewable energy upgrades by agricultural producers and rural small businesses. In 2014, \$12.3 million in grants and \$56.4 million in loans was awarded. Applications for REAP can be submitted on an ongoing basis, but the program is funded annually through Congressional appropriations.

### Who Qualifies

Rural small businesses and agricultural producers qualify for this program. Those groups are further defined as:

- Rural small business are communities of fewer than 50,000 people not located in a census-defined Metropolitan Statistical Area. The Small Business Administration defines a small business as one that is independently owned and operated, is organized for profit and is not dominant in its field. Depending on the industry, the size standard is based on the average number of employees and/or sales volume.
- Agricultural producers are individuals or businesses that receive at least 50 percent of their gross income from agriculture. The small and rural limitations do not apply to agricultural producers.

### What Qualifies

*Eligible energy efficiency improvements are any improvements to a facility, building or process that reduces energy consumption including but not limited to replacement of inefficient equipment, retrofitting, insulation or any recommended improvement identified in the energy assessment or energy audit.*

For example, eligible improvements for poultry producers could include any work that makes the houses tighter and better insulated such as adding high density spray foam sealants from Rhino Linings. Eligible improvements for other agricultural producers could include insulating livestock barns with spray foam insulation from Rhino Linings for better performance and less energy use.

The grant funds may be used to pay up to 25% of the eligible project costs, with a minimum grant request of \$1,500 (total project cost of \$6,000) and maximum grant request of \$250,000 for Energy Efficiency Improvements and \$500,000 for Renewable Energy Systems.

**Poultry producers could make their houses tighter and better insulated by adding high density spray foam sealants from Rhino Linings.**

**Other agricultural producers could insulate livestock barns, crop storage buildings or workshops with spray foam insulation from Rhino Linings for better performance and less energy use.**

Energy efficiency grants cannot be used for costs associated with the expansion of facilities. The grant can only be used for identifiable energy efficiency improvements such as lighting, heating, refrigeration, motorized equipment or insulation.

It is important to note that only costs of eligible improvements purchased and installed after the date that the completed application was received by USDA-RBCS (Rural Business-Cooperative Service) state office are eligible for grant reimbursement.

**How To Apply**

In December 2014, the USDA released a notice of solicitation of applications for REAP. The funding notice released mandatory funding for both FY2014 and FY2015. With two years of funding released at the same time, this notice of solicitation sets a record for the largest REAP funding notice in program history at \$101.35 million.

Applications go through a national competitive process. There are multiple application deadlines to facilitate the use of fiscal years 2014 and 2015 grant funds.

<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Application Type</b>
<b>April 30, 2015</b>	<b>Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvement Grants (over \$20,000 and combinations)</b>
<b>June 30, 2015*</b>	<b>Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvement Grants (\$20,000 or less not competing for set aside funds, over \$20,000 and combinations)</b>
<b>April 30, 2015</b>	<b>Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvement Grants (\$20,000 or less competing for set aside funds)</b>
<b>Continuous application</b>	<b>Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvement Guaranteed Loans</b>
<b>February 12, 2015*</b>	<b>Energy Audit and Renewable Energy Development Assistance Grants</b>

*\*Applications received after this date will be considered for the next cycle.*

Interested parties should contact their state USDA Energy Coordinator now to get application materials and start the application process which can take 30 days or more to complete.

Contact Rhino Linings at [www.rhinolinings.com/local](http://www.rhinolinings.com/local) to find an installer in your area and get an estimate for sealing and insulating your agricultural buildings.

**For More Information**

- [Program Website](#)
- [Federal Register Notice of Solicitation](#)
- [State Energy Coordinators](#)

