WASHINGTON, Dec. 22, 2023 – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced that it is hiring 40 Climate Change Fellows to help with the record numbers of applications from farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses seeking funding for clean energy projects under the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). The new positions are being funded by President Biden’s Inflation Reduction Act, the nation’s largest-ever investment in combatting the climate crisis, a key pillar of Bidenomics and part of the Investing in America agenda.

“The Biden-Harris Administration is hard at work making sure as many people as possible can access historic funding to make clean energy improvements at their farms, ranches and businesses,” Agriculture Deputy Secretary Torres Small said. “These innovations will help them increase their income, grow their businesses, address climate change and lower energy costs for American families.”
The positions are part of the USDA Climate Change Fellows Program, which hires new staff with a range of skills to carry out USDA’s activities to address climate change and find solutions to agricultural challenges, enhance economic growth and create new streams of income for farmers, ranchers and producers. The program brings expertise and fresh perspectives to the federal workforce and expands the climate consciousness of state offices around the country. These historic investments in future agricultural leaders will help USDA attract the best and brightest to face the growing challenges of the agricultural economy.

The Inflation Reduction Act provided REAP with $2 billion of funding to meet growing demand from farmers and small business owners looking to expand their use of wind, solar and other forms of clean energy and make energy efficiency improvements that save business owners money and in some cases generate new revenue sources through net metering and power purchase agreements. So far, USDA has made $1.25 billion of that available and has seen a dramatic increase in grant applications under the program. The program is part of President Biden’s Justice40 Initiative which made it a goal that 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain Federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution.

Three of the new positions will report to USDA Rural Development's national office. To apply, visit this USA Jobs posting.

Two fellows each will be based in Illinois, Iowa, Michigan and Minnesota.

One fellow each will be based in Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware/Maryland, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, North Carolina, North Dakota, Nebraska, New Jersey, Nevada, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, Wyoming and Puerto Rico.

To apply for a position in one of these states, visit this USA Jobs posting. To apply for a position in Puerto Rico, visit this USA Jobs posting.

Initial appointments may be for up to two years. Additional one-year extensions may be made up to four years. Most states will receive additional funds, announced at a later date, to provide REAP technical assistance in addition to these staffing positions.
Background: Inflation Reduction Act

As a core pillar of the President’s Investing in America agenda, the Inflation Reduction Act is the largest investment in climate action in history. It is also the largest single investment in rural electrification since the Rural Electrification Act of 1936.

The Biden-Harris Administration championed the Inflation Reduction Act to help provide new funding and unprecedented incentives to expand clean energy, transform rural power production, create jobs and spur economic growth. It is lowering energy costs, bringing opportunity to communities across America and tackling the climate crisis through investments in agriculture, forest restoration and rural communities.

REAP is part of the Justice40 Initiative, which is working to ensure that 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal investments reach disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution.

To learn more about investment resources for rural areas, visit www.rd.usda.gov or contact the nearest USDA Rural Development state office.

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities, create jobs and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural, tribal and high-poverty areas. For more information, visit www.rd.usda.gov.

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