

**COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT,  
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES**

**Fiscal Year 2024 Member Request Guidance**

**Database opens March 10, 2023**

**Submission deadline is 6:00 pm on March 24, 2023**

**Members must post CPF requests on their websites on April 10, 2023**

## **General Guidance**

The general procedures for submitting Member requests are in the Dear Colleague letter from Chairman Harris dated February 28, 2023. Please refer to that letter for general information regarding the fiscal year 2024 process, as well as the February 28th Dear Colleague from Chairwoman Granger. Please review those documents and this document in their entirety prior to submitting Member requests.

**All submission requests must be received by the Subcommittee no later than March 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM.**

Similar to prior years, offices must use the House Appropriations Committee's database <https://AppropriationsSubmissions.house.gov> for all Member requests. Please ensure that all field entries are complete and accurate. No printed materials will be accepted. Member offices may not submit requests on behalf of another office.

If you encounter problems with the Committee's database or have technical questions, please email [Approp.ITMemberRequest@mail.house.gov](mailto:Approp.ITMemberRequest@mail.house.gov). For general questions regarding this guidance, please email [AG.MemberRequests@mail.house.gov](mailto:AG.MemberRequests@mail.house.gov).

The supplemental information and directions provided in this document are intended to simplify the online request process and help ensure requests are entered correctly. Please read this document carefully before entering your requests online. It is important to ensure the information is entered accurately, so that the requests may be properly considered for funding.

### **Distinguishing Community Project Funding, Program, and Language Requests:**

**Community Project Funding (CPF) request:** A funding request for a specific governmental or other eligible entity to carry out a specific community project.

Example: *Provide \$500,000 for a specific entity in City, State.*

**Programmatic request:** A request to fund a specific program in the bill at a specified level.

Example: *Provide \$200,000,000 for the ReConnect program.*

**Language request:** A request to include specific bill or report language that does not direct funding to a particular entity but encourages, urges, or directs some type of action by an agency.

Example: *The Committee encourages USDA to study the impact of expanded broadband on rural*

*communities' economic prosperity.*

If the programmatic or report language request is intended to be for a specific governmental or other entity and not competitively awarded, then it should be requested as **Community Project Funding**.

If your office has any doubt about whether a programmatic or report language request would instead be classified as a Community Project Funding request, please contact the Subcommittee staff at [AG.MemberRequests@mail.house.gov](mailto:AG.MemberRequests@mail.house.gov).

### **Member Request Letters:**

Offices must **upload a single, signed Member letter addressed to subcommittee Chairman Harris and Ranking Member Bishop that includes all CPF, program, and language requests** for the FY 2024 Agriculture Appropriations bill. Member letters should provide enough information to clearly identify each request entered in the database and **include a priority ranking of CPF, program and language requests** consistent with the priority ranking you entered in the database.

If your member signed a delegation letter in support of funding for a specific program, or the inclusion of bill or report language to be included in the FY 2024 Agriculture Appropriations bill, that should be considered a request, entered in the database, and prioritized accordingly.

In addition, the database allows Members to separately rank their top 1-10 requests, across all subcommittees, as well as all of their CPF requests across all subcommittees. The Committee strongly encourages Members to make those rankings as well.

### **Community Project Funding Requests:**

The Subcommittee will include a limited number of community projects this year. Members will be able to submit up to 15 CPF proposals across all Subcommittees for the fiscal year 2024 process.

Although programmatic and language requests may be made for any account, **only six accounts in the Agriculture appropriations bill will include CPFs. Keep in mind project funding will depend on available resources, and larger requests may have to be reduced.**

All CPF requests must meet applicable eligibility requirements for the program in which the request is made, including applicable underlying statutory and regulatory requirements (e.g., cost share). Any CPFs that are funded in an appropriations bill will need to apply to USDA to receive the award. The application will be reviewed for compliance prior to official award. **To ensure your projects meet eligibility requirements for the Rural Development and Natural Resources Conservation Service accounts, you must consult with your respective State Rural Development or State Conservation office which can be found here:**

Rural Development: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/about-rd/state-offices>

Natural Resources Conservation Services: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/conservation-by-state/state-offices>

For each CPF request, Members will be asked to respond to a series of questions intended to provide transparency and ensure the project is a valuable use of taxpayer funds.

Here are the specific pieces of information needed for the Agriculture bill:

1. The website address of the proposed recipient.
2. If there are additional costs necessary to complete the project, have those been secured?
3. For Rural Development projects, is the project for an eligible purpose and does it meet all eligibility requirements under current law?
4. Does the entity plan to make grants to other entities from the funds provided and, if so, to whom?
5. Why is the project a priority for the district? Briefly explain the community benefits.
6. Has any funding for the project been included in any presidential budget and, if so, how much, in which fiscal year, and in which agency or agencies and program(s)?
7. Has the project received Federal funding before and, if so, how much, when, and from which agency or agencies and program(s)?
8. Have you contacted the State Rural Development Office/State Conservation Office to discuss the project and confirm eligibility?
9. For ARS B&F only, what is the estimated start date of the project? How soon could the feasibility/engineering design phase commence? [mm/yy]
10. For ARS B&F only, does the project have distinct and separable phases?
11. For ARS B&F only, what is the estimated completion date of the project? When does completion of construction occur? [mm/yy]
12. For ARS B&F only, have you verified that this facility is owned or operated by the Agricultural Research Service?
13. For ReConnect requests only, please provide relevant information, such as the number of households, businesses, or farms that would be served, what the performance of the service to be offered will be, and whether healthcare or educational facilities will be served.
14. For Conservation Operations requests only, briefly describe how the project will reduce soil erosion, enhance water supplies, improve water quality, increase wildlife habitat, or other objectives that will help conserve, maintain, and improve natural resources.
15. For Water and Waste requests only, provide relevant information, such as the number of households, businesses, or farms that would be served.

In addition to information about the project, the Member requesting a CPF must complete a signed financial disclosure certification and Federal nexus statement and upload it to the electronic submission system for each project submission. The signed letter must state that neither the Member nor their immediate family has a financial interest in the designated entity to receive funding, and that the project has a Federal nexus. Additional information on this is below.

As indicated above, all initial submissions are due **March 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm.**

**Following the end of the Committee’s two-week technical assistance review period, Member offices must post their financial disclosure certification and Federal nexus letters publicly on their website for all CPF requests on April 10, 2023.**

**Financial Disclosure Certification and Federal Nexus Letter:**

Offices must upload signed Member letters addressed to Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member DeLauro for each CPF request certifying that the Member and the Member’s “immediate family” (defined as father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, husband, wife, father-in-law, or mother-in-law) do not have any financial interest in the request. In addition, the letter must state the Federal nexus of the requested

project. A template can be found at the end of this guidance.

The Subcommittee suggests referencing these statutes when making the Federal nexus statement for the following types of Community Project Funding requests:

**Agricultural Research Service, Buildings and Facilities**

- This project has a Federal nexus because it is for the purposes authorized in 7 U.S. Code section 2250.

**Natural Resources Conservation Service, Conservation Operations**

- This project has a Federal nexus because it is for the purposes authorized by the Soil Conservation and Allotment Domestic Act of 1935, 16 U.S. Code sections 590a-590d and 590f-g.

**Rural Development, Rural Housing Service, Community Facility Grants**

- This project has a Federal nexus because it is for the purposes authorized in Section 306 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, 7 U.S. Code section 1926(a).

**Rural Development, Rural Utilities Service, ReConnect Grants**

- This project has a Federal nexus as it is for the same purposes authorized in the pilot program established by section 779 of division A of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (Public Law 115–141).

**Rural Development, Rural Utilities Service, Water and Waste Grants**

- This project has a Federal nexus because it is for the purposes authorized in Section 306 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, 7 U.S. Code section 1926(a)(2).

**Rural Development, Rural Utilities Service, Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grants**

- This project has a Federal nexus because it is for the purposes authorized in Section 2331 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, 7 U.S. Code section 950aaa.

**Other requirements:**

- Ensure CPF project titles submitted in the database, in the prioritized request letter, and in the financial disclosure certification letter **are all identical**.
- Ensure all CPF project titles include the city (or county as applicable) and two-letter state designation in which the project would be located.
- Ensure your CPF prioritization list entered into the database is identical to the prioritization in your Member’s request letter.
- Ensure that the name and location listed for each proposed CPF in the database are also noted in certification letter.
- Please make every effort to indicate if one of your CPFs is also being requested by another member.

**Additional guidance on Community Project Funding requests for eligible accounts:**

***Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Community Facilities Grants***

Grants to purchase, construct, or improve essential community facilities, to purchase equipment, and pay other related project expenses. Examples of eligible projects include but are not limited to: medical or dental clinics, healthcare facilities, police or fire departments, and public works vehicles.

Priority will be given to essential projects, such as those focused on public health and safety.

Any project must serve a rural area as specified in 7 CFR 3570.53 (rural areas including cities, villages, townships and Federally Recognized Tribal lands with no more than 20,000 residents).

The Member's request must demonstrate community support. Members should ensure that their request provides the most complete description of the project as possible. Submissions should include details on all proposed use of funds, activities that will occur, timeline, and detailed information on the complete service territory.

Such requests are also subject to cost share requirements specified in 7 CFR 3570.63(b). Please review program regulations carefully.

Community Facilities grants cannot be used to pay initial operating expenses or annual recurring expenses, refinance existing debt, pay interest, build or repair facilities in non-rural areas, or pay for construction costs of facilities that will be used for commercial rental space.

The State Rural Development Office is a valuable resource to answer program questions, including eligibility and non-federal cost share requirements. For fiscal year 2023, the average Community Facilities CPF award was about \$1.3 million.

#### ***Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, ReConnect Program***

ReConnect broadband pilot grants facilitate broadband deployment in rural areas. Grant funds can be used for the costs of construction, improvement, or acquisition of facilities and equipment needed to provide broadband service to rural areas without sufficient broadband access, defined as 25 Mbps downstream and 3 Mbps upstream.

The area must be rural and lack sufficient access to broadband service. A rural area is any area which is not located within a city, town, or incorporated area that has a population of greater than 20,000 inhabitants. Sufficient access to broadband is defined as greater than 90% of any rural area in which households have fixed, terrestrial broadband service delivering at least 25 Mbps downstream and 3 Mbps upstream. Mobile and satellite services will not be considered in making the determination of sufficient access to broadband.

Stand-alone middle-mile projects are not eligible under the ReConnect Program. However, middle-mile facilities are eligible if they are needed to bring sufficient broadband service to all premises in the area.

Members are strongly encouraged to include information in their requests, such as the number of households, businesses, or farms will be served in the area, what the performance of the service to be offered will be, and whether healthcare or educational facilities will be served.

Additionally, when submitting a request, Members are reminded that all policies and procedures apply, including environmental and related reviews and the non-federal cost share requirement of 25% of the overall project cost. Policies and procedures can be found at <https://go.usa.gov/xexPT>.

USDA's Rural Development office is a valuable resource to answer program questions, including eligibility. For fiscal year 2023, the average ReConnect CPF award was nearly \$1.2 million.

#### ***Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grants***

The Distance Learning and Telemedicine program (DLT) helps rural residents better utilize the enormous potential of modern telecommunications and the internet for education and healthcare, two critical components of economic and community development. The DLT program helps rural communities acquire the technology and training necessary to connect educational and medical professionals with students, teachers, and patients in rural areas.

Grants may be used for audio and video equipment, broadband facilities that support distance learning or telemedicine (not actual broadband), computer hardware or network components/software, and acquisition of instructional programming.

Any requests are subject to all regulations governing the program which can be found at 7 CFR Part 1734. The program requires a 15% match that cannot come from another Federal source. Members are strongly encouraged to provide as much detail as possible on how the award will be utilized, what equipment of service will be acquired and any information on population(s) served. The program is intended to serve rural areas with populations of 20,000 or less.

The State Rural Development Office is a valuable resource to answer program questions, including eligibility.

#### ***Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Waste Disposal Grants***

The Water and Waste Disposal Grant Program may be used to finance the acquisition, construction or improvement of drinking water sourcing, treatment, storage and disposal; sewer collection, transmission, treatment and disposal; solid waste collection, disposal and closure; and storm water collection, transmission, and closure.

Members are strongly encouraged to provide details on the number of households and businesses served and details of the exact work to be completed.

Eligible entities include rural areas and towns with population of 10,000 or less and Tribal lands in rural areas. The account has not been subject to CPFs in the previous years. Potential recipients will be required to provide a 25% non-federal cost share.

The State Rural Development Office is a valuable resource to answer program questions, including eligibility.

#### ***Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, Buildings and Facilities***

The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) owns and operates laboratories and facilities across the United States. Many of these laboratories/facilities are decades old, have outlived their functional lifespan, and are badly in need of major repairs, renovation, or replacement. Requests can assist in the acquisition of land, construction, repair, improvement, extension, alteration, and purchase of fixed equipment or facilities as necessary to carry out the agricultural research programs of the Department of Agriculture. Requests must be for ARS-owned or operated facilities.

Members are strongly encouraged to provide details on the research to be conducted, why the research is a high priority, as well as details on the modernization and why it is critical in carrying out the research.

*Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Conservation Operations*

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) supports private landowners, conservation districts, and other organizations to conserve, maintain, and improve the Nation's natural resources. Examples of specific objectives include reducing soil erosion, improving soil health, enhancing water supplies, improving water quality, increasing wildlife habitat, and reducing damage caused by floods and other natural disasters.

Members are strongly encouraged to provide details on the work to be done, including if the project will conduct surveys, investigations, or research, and if there is a plan to publish the results of any such work. Members should also describe any preventive measures to be taken, such as engineering operations, methods of cultivation, or changes in use of land.

For FY24, the Subcommittee will only consider projects for funding recipients that are State, local, and Tribal organizations, or public conservation districts. Non-profit recipients will not be considered.

The State Conservationist is a valuable resource to answer program questions, including eligibility. House CPFs in the account averaged about \$1.3 million in FY23.

For specific questions related to CPF accounts, please contact the Subcommittee staff using the email address [AG.MemberRequests@mail.house.gov](mailto:AG.MemberRequests@mail.house.gov).

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND  
DRUG ADMINISTRATION AND RELATED AGENCIES  
FISCAL YEAR 2024**

**TEMPLATE FOR MEMBER FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE CERTIFICATIONS AND  
FEDERAL NEXUS STATEMENTS**

Dear Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member DeLauro:

I am requesting funding for the \_\_\_\_\_ project in fiscal year 2024. The entity to receive funding for this project is \_\_\_\_\_, located at \_\_\_\_\_ (address including street name, city, state and zip code). The funding would be used for \_\_\_\_\_.  
The project is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds because \_\_\_\_\_.

The project has a federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes authorized by \_\_\_\_\_ (insert Public Law and/or U.S. Code citation suggested on page 4 of this guidance).

I certify that I have no financial interest in this project, and neither does anyone in my immediate family.

Sincerely,

Member of Congress

*These statements must be on letterhead and must be signed by the Member. Members must post these letters publicly on their website on the date of the final submission, as determined by each subcommittee. Please prepare the certification on letterhead and upload a PDF of the signed document to the request database.*