



FEMA

Region I COVID-19 Long-Term Recovery
Task Force

Recovery Action NEWS

July 2, 2020

Important Updates:

Opportunity Zones Toolkit Volume 2 Now Available to Guide Local Economic Development Plans and Strategies to Maximize Opportunity Zone Investment Across the Country

In partnership with the [White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council](#) (WHORC), the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently issued its [Opportunity Zones Toolkit Volume 2](#), a guide for local leaders to use when developing and implementing economic development strategies to leverage their Opportunity Zone designations.

The Toolkit builds on the roadmap established in the [Opportunity Zones Toolkit Volume 1](#) and provides tips, resources, and best practices to assist local leaders in economic development planning.

By aligning local, state and federal resources, establishing incentives, and building on new partnerships, communities in and around Opportunity Zones can attract the desired private capital investment they need to boost economic growth throughout their region.

EDA has made several critical policy changes to further fund and catalyze projects in and near Opportunity Zones:

- In 2018, EDA issued a [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) that made Opportunity Zones eligible for EDA funds through its special needs category.
- Last year, EDA added Opportunity Zones as one of our five [Investment Priorities](#)
- Last year, EDA incorporated Opportunity Zones into our Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) [Content Guidelines](#) to better assist local and regional planning partners to build effective approaches to maximize the benefits of Opportunity Zones.

In addition, EDA worked with the Indiana University and its Kelley School of Business to create statsamerica.org/opportunity, a web portal to link Opportunity Zones with economic and demographic data that intersects EDA's Economic Development District, University Center programs, and Revolving Loan Funds, and other work.

Earlier this month, the WHORC delivered a [report](#) outlining Opportunity Zone best practices and examples of revitalization occurring across America. The report prominently features policy actions and grants made by EDA that are generating investment in Opportunity Zones.

To learn more about EDA's Opportunity Zones work, please visit our [Opportunity Zones website](#).

USDA Implements Immediate Measures to Help Rural Residents, Businesses and Communities Affected by COVID-19

USDA Rural Development has taken a number of immediate actions to help rural residents, businesses and communities affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. Rural Development will keep our customers, partners and stakeholders continuously updated as more actions are taken to better serve rural America.

Visit www.rd.usda.gov/coronavirus for information on Rural Development loan payment assistance, application deadline extensions and more.



(Updated June 26, 2020) The * denotes a new or updated item.

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COVID-19 RESOURCES

On April 13, 2020, USDA unveiled a one-stop-shop of federal programs that can be used by rural communities, organizations and individuals impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The [COVID-19 Federal Rural Resource Guide](#) (PDF, 349 KB) is a first-of-its-kind resource for rural leaders looking for federal funding and partnership opportunities to help address this pandemic.

On May, 4, 2020, USDA released a summary of [key service changes](#) to increase the use of telehealth in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These changes will help ensure that more rural residents can access care when and where they need it during this pandemic. This summary is intended to help interested parties understand the telehealth changes that have been made and explore new ways to support health care providers as they increase or transition to virtual care services.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMMEDIATE RELIEF

Rural Housing Service

Single-Family Housing

* Effective June 19, with the exception of vacant or abandoned dwellings, foreclosures and related evictions for borrowers with USDA single family housing Direct and Guaranteed loans are suspended through August 31, 2020.

Direct Loan Program:

- USDA has waived or relaxed certain parts of the application process for Single-Family Housing Direct Loans, including site assessments, and has extended the time period that certificates of eligibility are valid.
- A Direct Loan borrower who is experiencing a reduction of income can request a Payment Assistance package to see if he/she is eligible for payment assistance or for more assistance than currently received.
- Moratorium assistance for up to 180 days is available for Direct Loan borrowers experiencing financial hardship due, directly or indirectly, to the COVID-19 emergency. You can call us and verbally request a payment moratorium. Borrowers have the option to cancel the moratorium at any time or request the moratorium be extended up to an additional 180 days.