

Enhancing Participation Through Outreach and Technical Assistance for USDA Programs in Wisconsin

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USDA Section 2501 Program

- ▶ Section 2501 Program administered by USDA's Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement (OPPE)
- ▶ Introduced in 1990 Farm Bill
- ▶ grant helps historically underserved farmers directly access USDA programs
- ▶ Historically underserved farmers include
 - ▶ Socially Disadvantaged include:
 - ▶ African Americans
 - ▶ American Indians or Alaskan Natives
 - ▶ Hispanics
 - ▶ Asians
 - ▶ Pacific Islanders
 - ▶ Military Veterans

Program Priorities

- ▶ Assist socially disadvantaged or veteran farmers and ranchers in owning and operating successful farms and ranches.
- ▶ Improve participation among socially disadvantaged or veteran farmers and ranchers in USDA programs.
- ▶ Build relationships between current and prospective socially disadvantaged or veteran farmers and ranchers and USDA's local, state, regional and national offices.
- ▶ Introduce agriculture-related information to socially disadvantaged or veteran farmers and ranchers through innovative outreach and technical assistance techniques.
- ▶ Introduce agricultural education targeting socially disadvantaged youth and beginning farmers and ranchers, in rural and persistent poverty communities

Grant Eligibility

- ▶ organizations that develop outreach programs and provide technical assistance to underserved farmers
- ▶ Organizations must have demonstrated expertise in working with underserved, socially disadvantaged (SDA) and/or veteran farmer communities
- ▶ Maximum amount that organizations can apply for is \$250,000 per year for a 3-year grant project



ESW FARM's Enhancing Participation through Outreach and Technical Assistance for USDA Programs in Wisconsin project

- ▶ Partnership with UW Extension AgrAbility of Wisconsin
- ▶ Three year grant to serve SDA and veteran farmers in Wisconsin
- ▶ Focus on Hmong and veterans
- ▶ Project long-term goal is to increase
 - ▶ Knowledge and awareness of USDA programs
 - ▶ Engaged and effective participation in USDA programs



Project Priority Areas

- ▶ Assist socially disadvantaged or veteran farmers in owning and operating successful farms and ranches
- ▶ Improve participation among socially disadvantaged or veteran farmers in USDA programs
- ▶ Introduce agriculture-related information to socially disadvantaged or veteran farmers through innovative training and technical assistance techniques
- ▶ Introduce agricultural education targeting socially disadvantaged youth, and/or socially disadvantaged beginning farmers, in rural and persistent poverty communities

Project Goals

- ▶ Increase the number of current and new SDA and veteran farmers who will be made aware of USDA services
- ▶ Increase the number of current and new SDA and veteran farmers who will apply for USDA programs after learning about the available services
- ▶ Increase the number of SDA and veteran farmer applications that will be approved for funding
- ▶ Increase in the number of USDA Agency's programs and services utilized by socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers referred to USDA Agencies

Focus on Hmong and Veteran Populations

▶ Hmong Population

- ▶ 49,240 Hmong in Wisconsin
- ▶ third-highest state population in the nation



▶ Military Veterans

- ▶ 8,478 veterans identify as agriculture producers in Wisconsin
- ▶ Only 14 veterans received farm loans from the USDA Farm Service Agency last year
- ▶ 11% of AgrAbility clients served are veterans

Partner Responsibilities

▶ ESW FARM

▶ Provide individual support and assistance

- ▶ Individualized support
- ▶ Technical assistance
- ▶ Guidance and consultation
- ▶ Follow-up and support

▶ Educational Opportunities

- ▶ Exploring Job Options in Rural Wisconsin
 - ▶ Expanding existing material and presentations to include USDA program information

Partner Responsibilities

- ▶ UW Extension - AgrAbility of Wisconsin
 - ▶ Provide outreach through various avenues including
 - ▶ Farm and Trade Shows
 - ▶ Newsletters/Digital & Social Media
 - ▶ Annual AAW Summit
 - ▶ Education Presentations
 - ▶ Participation in groups/organizations targeting SDA and veteran farmers
 - ▶ Farmer Network Meetings
 - ▶ USDA State Agencies Collaboration

Three Year Project Outcomes

- ▶ One hundred new SDA and veteran farmers will be made aware of USDA programs
- ▶ 50 current and new Hmong, other socially disadvantaged, and veteran farmers will apply for USDA services after learning about the available services
- ▶ 50 current and new SDA and veteran farmers will have increased access to and participation in USDA's programs and services
- ▶ 25 new SDA and veteran farmer USDA applications will be approved for funding as a result of the project activities
- ▶ 25% increase in the number of USDA Agencies' programs and services utilized by SDA and veteran farmers referred to USDA Agencies

Measured Impacts of Project

- ▶ Tracking the number of individuals who stated that they have contacted USDA agencies about potential interest in programs
- ▶ Surveys provided to SDA and veteran farmers that participated in the project
 - ▶ Surveys created by UW Extension and ESW FARM staff in collaboration
 - ▶ USDA Agencies do not track this information creating a challenge for the project to track outcomes



Questions?