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Action-
Learning for
the Rural
Family
Economic
Success
(RuFES)
Alumni
Network

Sponsored by
the Annie E.
Casey
Foundation

Coordinated
by the Aspen
Institute
Community
Strategies
Group

November 18, 2010**Dear RuFES Action Network,****EARN IT and GROW IT****Fresh Funds for Fresh New Farmers...and Ranchers**

As **RuFES Action Network** members know, rural America is about much more than farming and ranching. Still, those activities remain an integral part of the social and economic fabric of rural America, as well as the nation as a whole. American farming and ranching, however, is undergoing a change. Why? Well, the average age of today's farmer is 57, and more than half of the farmland in the country is owned by farmers over the age of 55. As these farmers edge towards retirement, a new generation will need to replace them.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) offers *Earn It-* and *Grow It-* related help by assisting the next wave of farmers and ranchers through its Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP). BFRDP is offering **\$19 million** to develop and offer education, outreach, mentoring and internship programs to support this next generation. BFRDP offers two types of grants:

Standard Projects (programmatic and training) grants—including, but not limited to:

- offering mentoring, apprenticeships and internships
- providing resources and referral
- helping beginning farmers and ranchers acquire land from retiring farmers and ranchers
- providing entrepreneurship and business training
- training in basic livestock and crop farming practices

Educational Enhancement grants—for evaluation, coordination and enhancement of Standard Projects

What groups are eligible to apply?

Federal, state, tribal, local government agencies or a regionally-based network/partnership of public or private entities may apply. **At least two** organizations *must* be involved. These may include:

- State cooperative extension services
- Federal, State or Tribal agencies
- Community-based or non-governmental organizations

Two- or four- year colleges or universities
A college or university foundation

The **closing date** for applications is **December 22, 2010**.

Applications for the BFRDP grants are available through grants.gov. As with any funding proposal sent through grants.gov, we strongly urge first-time users to register at the website well in advance, as first-time registration takes a number of days to process.

For more detailed information on the BFRDP grants, please visit [BFRDP's grant page](#) on grants.gov.

Help for Prospective Grantees

For those who intend to apply, USDA is conducting a **webinar** on **November 22, 2010** between **2:00 and 3:30 pm EST** to assist prospective grantees. *Note: The webinar is limited to 70 live participants. Others may listen to the recording later.*

To get more information on the November 22nd webinar, please visit the [USDA's BFRDP grant page](#).

We hope these Action Alerts energize your RuFES deeds and aspirations. Help us spark **more** RuFES action! How? Simply [contact us](#) with any news, ideas or opportunities that can help your RuFES colleagues across the nation.

Your RuFES Action Team,

[John Molinaro](#), [Janet Topolsky](#), [Kelly Malone](#), [René Bryce-Laporte](#), [Elsa Noterman](#)
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