



USDA Extends Application Deadline for Discrimination Financial Assistance Program to January 13

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 17, 2023 - The U.S. Department of Agriculture is extending the deadline for the Discrimination Financial Assistance Program to January 13, 2024, to give eligible farmers, ranchers and forest landowners more time to apply for assistance. The original deadline was October 31, 2023.

This deadline extension is responsive to feedback from potential applicants, nongovernmental program administrators and community-based organizations working closely with USDA to inform and assist eligible individuals. The new deadline will allow more time to reach and help farmers, ranchers and forest landowners through direct, no-cost technical assistance and training sessions. The extension will also ensure everyone has adequate time to apply, including producers whose harvest season falls during the original application period.

"USDA knows it must earn the trust of the farmers, ranchers and forest landowners who are eligible for this program. That makes transparency in the administration of the Discrimination Financial Assistance Program crucial," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "In that spirit, after receiving feedback from organizations that have been supporting producers throughout the application process, we have made the decision to extend the deadline. We believe this is the appropriate action to take to ensure all eligible individuals wishing to apply are adequately informed about the program and have the opportunity to receive any necessary assistance."

Since the opening of the financial assistance application process on July 7, the Discrimination Financial Assistance Program team has embarked on a nationwide outreach campaign and quickly opened 30 local offices across 26 states. Regional administrators have held well over 600 virtual and in-person events across the country. Cooperators have also held dozens of virtual and in-person events to complement these efforts while also educating their specific networks. Advertising on digital, print and radio channels targeting potentially eligible individuals and rural communities has also been deployed. These efforts have successfully allowed program staff to reach many potential applicants and will be further increased with the new, extended deadline.

This program delivers on Section 22007 of the Inflation Reduction Act, which provides financial assistance for farmers, ranchers and forest landowners who experienced discrimination in USDA farm lending programs prior to January 2021. Congress provided a total of \$2.2 billion for this program. The amount of money awarded to individuals through this program will depend on the number of eligible applicants and the consequences of the discrimination. Eligible individuals have the option to apply online or by submitting paper-based forms via mail or in-person delivery to local program offices. Applicants are not required to retain an attorney and should take precautions to protect themselves from potential scams.

In addition to the application deadline change, the deadline to request records from USDA's Farm Service Agency for use in applications has been extended to Friday, Nov. 3, 2023. The application process was designed so that FSA records are not required, though relevant records may be attached to an application as additional evidence if they are available.

To learn more about the Discrimination Financial Assistance Program or receive assistance in English or Spanish, visit www.22007apply.gov, email info@22007apply.gov or contact the national call center at 1-800-721-0970 from 8 a.m. ET to 8 p.m. PT, every day except federal holidays. If you use sign language to communicate, you can use the 711 relay service to call. You may also email or contact the national call center if you have a disability and need another accommodation. Information about the program, resources, recent office openings and local events across the country is also available through a [weekly e-newsletter](#).

USDA's commitment to equity spans the Department's mission areas and agencies. We are actively working to build a USDA that ensures none of our customers are ignored or left behind. The Discrimination Financial Assistance Program is just one of many programs helping USDA rebuild trust, address systemic issues and improve service to people who may have been underserved by USDA in the past. To learn more about USDA's equity work and resources, visit www.usda.gov/equity.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate-smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.

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