

AMENDMENTS

2008—Pub. L. 110-246, §6028, amended section generally. Prior to amendment, section related to rural strategic investment program.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2008 AMENDMENT

Amendment of this section and repeal of Pub. L. 110-234 by Pub. L. 110-246 effective May 22, 2008, the date of enactment of Pub. L. 110-234, see section 4 of Pub. L. 110-246, set out as an Effective Date note under section 8701 of this title.

§ 2009dd-5. Regional innovation grants program**(a) Grants****(1) In general**

The Secretary shall provide, on a competitive basis, regional innovation grants to Regional Boards for use in implementing projects and initiatives that are identified in a regional rural investment strategy approved under section 2009dd-4 of this title.

(2) Timing

After October 1, 2008, the Secretary shall provide awards under this section on a quarterly funding cycle.

(b) Eligibility

To be eligible to receive a regional innovation grant, a Regional Board shall demonstrate to the Secretary that—

(1) the regional rural investment strategy of a Regional Board has been reviewed by the National Board prior to approval by the Secretary;

(2) the management and organizational structure of the Regional Board is sufficient to oversee grant projects, including management of Federal funds; and

(3) the Regional Board has a plan to achieve, to the maximum extent practicable, the performance-based benchmarks of the project in the regional rural investment strategy.

(c) Limitations**(1) Amount received**

A Regional Board may not receive more than \$6,000,000 in regional innovation grants under this section during any 5-year period.

(2) Determination of amount

The Secretary shall determine the amount of a regional innovation grant based on—

(A) the needs of the region being addressed by the applicable regional rural investment strategy consistent with the purposes described in subsection (f)(2); and

(B) the size of the geographical area of the region.

(3) Geographic diversity

The Secretary shall ensure that not more than 10 percent of funding made available under this section is provided to Regional Boards in any State.

(d) Cost-sharing**(1) Limitation**

Subject to paragraph (2), the amount of a grant made under this section shall not exceed 50 percent of the cost of the project.

(2) Waiver of grantee share

The Secretary may waive the limitation in paragraph (1) under special circumstances, as determined by the Secretary, including—

(A) a sudden or severe economic dislocation;

(B) significant chronic unemployment or poverty;

(C) a natural disaster; or

(D) other severe economic, social, or cultural duress.

(3) Other Federal assistance

For the purpose of determining cost-share limitations for any other Federal program, funds provided under this section shall be considered to be non-Federal funds.

(e) Preferences

In providing regional innovation grants under this section, the Secretary shall give—

(1) a high priority to strategies that demonstrate significant leverage of capital and quality job creation; and

(2) a preference to an application proposing projects and initiatives that would—

(A) advance the overall regional competitiveness of a region;

(B) address the priorities of a regional rural investment strategy, including priorities that—

(i) promote cross-sector collaboration, public-private partnerships, or the provision of interim financing or seed capital for program implementation;

(ii) exhibit collaborative innovation and entrepreneurship, particularly within a public-private partnership; and

(iii) represent a broad coalition of interests described in section 2009dd-3(a) of this title;

(C) include a strategy to leverage public non-Federal and private funds and existing assets, including agricultural, natural resource, and public infrastructure assets, with substantial emphasis placed on the existence of real financial commitments to leverage available funds;

(D) create quality jobs;

(E) enhance the role, relevance, and leveraging potential of community and regional foundations in support of regional investment strategies;

(F) demonstrate a history, or involve organizations with a history, of successful leveraging of capital for economic development and public purposes;

(G) address gaps in existing basic services, including technology, within a region;

(H) address economic diversification, including agricultural and non-agriculturally based economies, within a regional framework;

(I) improve the overall quality of life in the region;

(J) enhance the potential to expand economic development successes across diverse stakeholder groups within the region;

(K) include an effective working relationship with 1 or more institutions of higher education, tribally controlled colleges or universities, or tribal technical institutions;

(L) help to meet the other regional competitiveness needs identified by a Regional Board; or

(M) protect and promote rural heritage.

(f) Uses

(1) Leverage

A Regional Board shall prioritize projects and initiatives carried out using funds from a regional innovation grant provided under this section, based in part on the degree to which members of the Regional Board are able to leverage additional funds for the implementation of the projects.

(2) Purposes

A Regional Board may use a regional innovation grant—

(A) to support the development of critical infrastructure (including technology deployment and services) necessary to facilitate the competitiveness of a region;

(B) to provide assistance to entities within the region that provide essential public and community services;

(C) to enhance the value-added production, marketing, and use of agricultural and natural resources within the region, including activities relating to renewable and alternative energy production and usage;

(D) to assist with entrepreneurship, job training, workforce development, housing, educational, or other quality of life services or needs, relating to the development and maintenance of strong local and regional economies;

(E) to assist in the development of unique new collaborations that link public, private, and philanthropic resources, including community foundations;

(F) to provide support for business and entrepreneurial investment, strategy, expansion, and development, including feasibility strategies, technical assistance, peer networks, business development funds, and other activities to strengthen the economic competitiveness of the region;

(G) to provide matching funds to enable community foundations located within the region to build endowments which provide permanent philanthropic resources to implement a regional investment strategy; and

(H) to preserve and promote rural heritage.

(3) Availability of funds

The funds made available to a Regional Board or any other eligible grantee through a regional innovation grant shall remain available for the 7-year period beginning on the date on which the award is provided, on the condition that the Regional Board or other grantee continues to be certified by the Secretary as making adequate progress toward achieving established benchmarks.

(g) Cost sharing

(1) Waiver of grantee share

The Secretary may waive the share of a grantee of the costs of a project funded by a regional innovation grant under this section if the Secretary determines that such a waiver is appropriate, including with respect to special circumstances within tribal regions, in the event an area experiences—

(A) a sudden or severe economic dislocation;

(B) significant chronic unemployment or poverty;

(C) a natural disaster; or

(D) other severe economic, social, or cultural duress.

(2) Other Federal programs

For the purpose of determining cost-sharing requirements for any other Federal program, funds provided as a regional innovation grant under this section shall be considered to be non-Federal funds.

(h) Noncompliance

If a Regional Board or other eligible grantee fails to comply with any requirement relating to the use of funds provided under this section, the Secretary may—

(1) take such actions as are necessary to obtain reimbursement of unused grant funds; and

(2) reprogram the recaptured funds for purposes relating to implementation of this subchapter.

(i) Priority to areas with awards and approved strategies

(1) In general

Subject to paragraph (3), in providing rural development assistance under other programs, the Secretary shall give a high priority to areas that receive innovation grants under this section.

(2) Consultation

The Secretary shall consult with the heads of other Federal agencies to promote the development of priorities similar to those described in paragraph (1).

(3) Exclusion of certain programs

Paragraph (1) shall not apply to the provision of rural development assistance under any program relating to basic health, safety, or infrastructure, including broadband deployment or minimum environmental needs.

(Pub. L. 87-128, title III, §385F, as added Pub. L. 107-171, title VI, §6030, May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 407; amended Pub. L. 110-234, title VI, §6028, May 22, 2008, 122 Stat. 1190; Pub. L. 110-246, §4(a), title VI, §6028, June 18, 2008, 122 Stat. 1664, 1951.)

CODIFICATION

Pub. L. 110-234 and Pub. L. 110-246 made identical amendments to this section. The amendments by Pub. L. 110-234 were repealed by section 4(a) of Pub. L. 110-246.

AMENDMENTS

2008—Pub. L. 110-246, §6028, amended section generally. Prior to amendment, section provided regional strategic investment planning grants to Regional Boards.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2008 AMENDMENT

Amendment of this section and repeal of Pub. L. 110-234 by Pub. L. 110-246 effective May 22, 2008, the date of enactment of Pub. L. 110-234, see section 4 of Pub. L. 110-246, set out as an Effective Date note under section 8701 of this title.

§ 2009dd-6. Rural endowment loans program

(a) In general

The Secretary may provide long-term loans to eligible community foundations to assist in the