

§ 2008l. Eligibility of employees of State, county, or area committee for loans and loan guarantees

(a) In general

The Secretary shall not prohibit an employee of a State, county or area committee established under section 590h(b)(5) of title 16 or an employee of the Department of Agriculture from obtaining a loan or loan guarantee under subchapter I, II or III of this chapter.

(b) Approvals

(1) County or area office

In the case of a loan application from an employee in a county or area office, the Farm Service Agency State office shall be responsible for reviewing and approving the application.

(2) State office

In the case of a loan application from an employee of a State office, the Farm Service Agency national office shall be responsible for reviewing and approving the application.

(Pub. L. 87-128, title III, §377, as added Pub. L. 107-171, title V, §5321, May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 349.)

§ 2008m. National Rural Development Partnership

(a) Definitions

In this section:

(1) Agency with rural responsibilities

The term “agency with rural responsibilities” means any executive agency (as defined in section 105 of title 5) that implements a Federal law, or administers a program, targeted at or having a significant impact on rural areas.

(2) Coordinating Committee

The term “Coordinating Committee” means the National Rural Development Coordinating Committee established by subsection (c) of this section.

(3) Partnership

The term “Partnership” means the National Rural Development Partnership continued by subsection (b) of this section.

(4) State rural development council

The term “State rural development council” means a State rural development council that meets the requirements of subsection (d) of this section.

(b) Partnership

(1) In general

The Secretary shall continue the National Rural Development Partnership composed of—

- (A) the Coordinating Committee; and
- (B) State rural development councils.

(2) Purposes

The purposes of the Partnership are to empower and build the capacity of States and rural communities to design flexible and innovative responses to their own special rural development needs, with local determinations of progress and selection of projects and activities.

(3) Governing panel

(A) In general

A panel consisting of representatives of the Coordinating Committee and State rural development councils shall be established to lead and coordinate the strategic operation, policies, and practices of the Partnership.

(B) Annual reports

In conjunction with the Coordinating Committee and State rural development councils, the panel shall prepare and submit to Congress an annual report on the activities of the Partnership.

(4) Role of Federal Government

The role of the Federal Government in the Partnership may be that of a partner and facilitator, with Federal agencies authorized—

(A) to cooperate with States to implement the Partnership;

(B) to provide States with the technical and administrative support necessary to plan and implement tailored rural development strategies to meet local needs;

(C) to ensure that the head of each agency with rural responsibilities designates a senior-level agency official to represent the agency on the Coordinating Committee and directs appropriate field staff to participate fully with the State rural development council within the jurisdiction of the field staff; and

(D) to enter into cooperative agreements with, and to provide grants and other assistance to, the Coordinating Committee and State rural development councils.

(c) National Rural Development Coordinating Committee

(1) Establishment

The Secretary shall establish a National Rural Development Coordinating Committee within the Department of Agriculture.

(2) Composition

The Coordinating Committee shall be composed of—

(A) 1 representative of each agency with rural responsibilities; and

(B) representatives, approved by the Secretary, of—

(i) national associations of State, regional, local, and tribal governments and intergovernmental and multijurisdictional agencies and organizations;

(ii) national public interest groups;

(iii) other national nonprofit organizations that elect to participate in the activities of the Coordinating Committee; and

(iv) the private sector.

(3) Duties

The Coordinating Committee shall—

(A) support the work of the State rural development councils;

(B) facilitate coordination of rural development policies, programs, and activities among Federal agencies and with those of State, local, and tribal governments, the private sector, and nonprofit organizations;