WISCAP RECEIVES USDA GRANT TO CREATE RURAL WISCONSIN JOBS

The Wisconsin Community Action Program Association (WISCAP) has been awarded a one-year Rural Business Development Grant from the United States Department of Agriculture to provide business development assistance to start up or expand small or emerging businesses and create full-time year-round jobs in small rural communities of under 5,000 people.

WISCAP, through a partnership with six of its member Community Action Agencies (CAAs), will provide technical assistance to small businesses in rural areas throughout 28 counties in Wisconsin. The $133,700 project will make consulting services available to entrepreneurs to start or expand businesses by providing help with feasibility studies, business planning, financial analysis, marketing strategies, access to loans, and pivoting business operations to adapt to the challenges of the Covid-19 landscape. Partnering agencies include ADVOCAP, CAP Services, Central Wisconsin Community Action Council, Coulee Cap, Southwestern Wisconsin Community Action Program, and Western Dairyland Economic Opportunity Council.

“Wisconsin businesses have been seriously disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic, but none more so than small businesses in rural communities” said Brad Paul, WISCAP’s Executive Director. “When rural businesses struggle to survive - or are forced to shut down - the impact on the community can be enormous and cause proportionally greater economic damage than in more populated areas. This USDA grant will enable Community Action Agencies to bring their business development expertise to the smallest towns and villages, helping start-up and expand non-farm businesses that create rural jobs. There has never been a better strategy to improve incomes and stabilize families than creating good jobs at local companies with deep community roots.”

The USDA grant builds on over 30 years of WISCAP’s successful Job & Business Development program that has assisted low-income entrepreneurs to start or expand small businesses. Since 1989 JBD has launched over 2,285 small businesses and created over 6,252 Wisconsin jobs.

For more information on this program, contact Heidi O’Brien at 608-244-4422 or at hobrien@wiscap.org