

USDA Offers Targeted Farm Loan Funding for Underserved Groups and Beginning Farmers?

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Indianapolis, November 20, 2024 - The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers that FSA offers targeted farm ownership and farm operating loans to assist underserved applicants and beginning farmers.

“Farming is a capital-intensive business and FSA is committed to helping producers start and maintain their agricultural operations,” said Julia A. Wickard, FSA State Executive Director in Indiana. “FSA loans are designed to make sure that everyone has access to credit including underserved and beginning farmers. Last year, FSA in Indiana obligated \$80 million in loans to underserved borrowers and beginning farmers.”

USDA defines underserved applicants as a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of the group without regard to their individual qualities. For farm loan program purposes, targeted underserved groups are women, African Americans, American Indians and Alaskan Natives, Hispanics and Asians and Pacific Islanders.

Underserved or beginning farmers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank can apply for either FSA direct loans or guaranteed loans. Direct loans are made to applicants by FSA. Guaranteed loans are made by lending institutions who arrange for FSA to guarantee the loan. FSA can guarantee up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. The FSA guarantee allows lenders to make agricultural credit available to producers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria.

The direct and guaranteed loan program provides for two types of loans: farm ownership loans and farm operating loans. In addition to customary farm operating and ownership loans, FSA offers Microloans through the direct loan program. Microloans focus on the financing needs of small, beginning farmer, niche, and non-traditional farm operations. Microloans are available for both ownership and operating finance needs. To learn more about microloans, visit fsa.usda.gov/microloans.

To qualify as a beginning producer, the individual or entity must meet the eligibility requirements outlined for direct or guaranteed loans. Individuals and all entity members must have operated a farm for less than 10 years. Applicants must materially or substantially participate in the operation.

For more information on FSA's farm loan programs and targeted underserved and beginning farmer guidelines, contact your local [USDA Service Center](#) or visit fsa.usda.gov/farmloans.

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