

Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge (RPIC)

What does this initiative do?

The Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge (RPIC) provides planning support, technical assistance, and training to encourage placemaking activities in rural communities. Funds can be used to help rural communities develop placemaking plans to boost broadband capacity and access, preserve cultural and historic structures, and support the development of transportation, housing, and recreational spaces.

Who may apply?

- **Federally-recognized Tribes and Native American Tribal organizations**
- **Institutions of higher education, including:**
 - **Land-Grant Colleges and Universities as established under the Morrill Acts of 1862, 1890, and 1994**
 - **Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)**
 - **Hispanic-Serving Institutions**
- **Nonprofit organizations with 501(c)(3) IRS status**
- **Public bodies**
- **Small, private businesses that meet size standards established by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)**

Eligible applicants must demonstrate experience in administering federal grants and providing economic development and placemaking technical assistance in one of four U.S. regions: northeastern, southern, midwestern, and western.

What is “placemaking?”

For the purposes of the RPIC initiative, placemaking is defined as “a collaborative process among public, private, philanthropic and community partners to strategically improve the social, cultural, and economic structure of a community.”

Through intentional design, placemaking helps boost the connection between the people in a community and the spaces they share. Community-based collaboration is at the heart of placemaking.

What kind of funding is available?

USDA is making up to \$3 million in grants available. The maximum grant award is \$250,000.

How may funds be used?

Grant recipients can use funds to provide technical assistance and training to help rural communities identify and gather partners, establish community needs, and develop placemaking plans. USDA particularly encourages applications that support economically-distressed communities. Emphasis also is placed on projects that enhance broadband infrastructure, capacity, and deployment.

What is an eligible area?

Planning must directly benefit cities or towns with populations of 50,000 or fewer.

What key factors must plans include?

USDA encourages organizations to develop multijurisdictional or multisectoral plans that, at minimum, include the following elements:

1. An emphasis on partnerships and collaboration among public, private, and philanthropic and community partners
2. Combine federal, Tribal, state and / or local resources to ensure wide-ranging impacts on rural quality of life
3. Use placemaking processes to create quality places where people want to live, work, and play.

How to apply:

Applications are available at [grants.gov](https://www.usda.gov/grants).

For more information:

For more information, email RD.RPIC@usda.gov or visit www.rd.usda.gov/RPIC.

You may also contact your local office for assistance. You will find additional forms, resources, and program information at [rd.usda.gov](https://www.rd.usda.gov). *USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.*