MEMBER CHECKLIST FOR SUBMISSIONS TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION AND RELATED AGENCIES

General Guidance

The general procedures for submitting Member requests in the 117th Congress are in the Dear Colleague letter from Chairman Bishop dated March 10, 2021**.** Please refer to that letter for general information regarding the fiscal year 2022 process, as well as the March 4th Dear Colleague and attachments from Chair DeLauro.

The online requests must be received by the Subcommittee no later than April 15 at 6PM**.**

The supplemental information and directions provided in this document are intended to simplify the on-line request process and help ensure requests are entered correctly. Please read this document carefully before entering your requests online. It is important to ensure the information is entered accurately, so that the requests may be properly considered for funding.

Distinguishing community project, program, and language requests:

Community Project Funding request: a funding request for a specific governmental entity or non-profit organization to carry out a specific community project.

Example: *Provide $500,000 for a specific entity in City, State.*

Programmatic request: a request to fund a specific program in the bill at a specified level.

Example: *Provide $1,000,000,000 for the ReConnect program.*

Language request: a request to include specific bill or report language that does not direct funding to a particular entity but encourages, urges, or directs some type of action by an agency.

Example: *The Committee encourages USDA to study the impact of expanded broadband on rural communities' economic prosperity.*

If the programmatic or report language request is intended to be for a specific governmental entity or non-profit organization and not competitively awarded, or if it narrowly defines a competitive grant to the extent that only one entity or geographic area can apply**, this is a community project funding request and must be submitted as such.**

If your office has any doubt about whether a programmatic or report language request would instead be classified as a community-based project request, please contact the Subcommittee staff.

Community Project Funding Requests:

The Subcommittee will include a very limited number of community projects this year.

All Community Project Funding requests must meet all applicable eligibility requirements for the program in which the request is made. Although programmatic or language requests may be made for

any account, **only three accounts in the Agriculture appropriations bill will be earmarked**. The requests must comply with underlying statutory and regulatory requirements (e.g., cost share).

For each Community Project Funding request, Members will be asked to respond to a series of questions intended to provide transparency and ensure the project is a valuable use of taxpayer funds.

Here are the specific pieces of information needed for the Agriculture bill:

1. The website address of the proposed recipient
2. If there are additional costs necessary to complete the project, have those been secured?
3. For rural development projects, is the project for an eligible purpose and does it meet all eligibility requirements under current law?
4. Does the entity plan to make grants to other entities from the funds provided and if so, to which entities?
5. Why is the project a priority for the district? Briefly explain the community benefits.
6. Has any funding for the project been included in any presidential budget and if so, how much, in which fiscal year, and in which agency or agencies and program(s)?
7. Has the project received federal funding before and if so, how much, when, and from which agency or agencies and program(s)?
8. For ARS B&F only, what is the estimated start date of the project? How soon could the feasibility/engineering design phase commence? [mm/yy]
9. For ARS B&F only, does the project have distinct and separable phases?
10. For ARS B&F only, what is the estimated completion date of the project? When does completion of construction occur? [mm/yy]
11. For ReConnect requests, please provide relevant information, such as the number of households, businesses, or farms that would be served, what the performance of the service to be offered will be, and whether healthcare or educational facilities will be served.

In addition to information about the project, the Member requesting funding must complete a signed financial disclosure letter and upload it to the electronic submission system for each project submission. This letter will be posted online by the Committee if the request is included in a FY 2022 Appropriations Bill. Language and programmatic requests do not require a disclosure letter.

To offer more opportunity for public scrutiny of Member requests, Members must post information on the requests they have submitted to the Appropriations Committee on their official House website at the time the request is made. The Appropriations Committee will only consider funding only those requests that have been so posted. The website must contain the following information for each request submitted in FY 2022:

- The proposed recipient, and address of the recipient,
- The amount of the request,
- An explanation of the request, including purpose, and why it is a valuable use of taxpayer funds.

Members will be asked to provide a link to the webpage containing this information when they enter the request into the Members' Request system.

Each request for a Community Project requires a signed certification letter stating that neither the Member nor their immediate family has a financial interest in the designated entity to receive funding.

Request letter:

☐ Each request letter must contain: a prioritized list of community-based projects, dollar amount and specific account for each such project.
☐ The letter must be signed by the Member and printed on Member's letterhead.

Certification letter:
☐ Each certification letter must follow the specific instructions in the database.
☐ The letter must be signed by the Member and printed on the Member's letterhead.
☐ While Members are required to certify to the Committee that neither they nor their immediate family have a financial interest in proposed project, Members should also be fully aware of any other financial aspects or relationships associated with the proposed project that might raise ethical concerns. These include but are not limited to lobbyists, donors, or other affiliated parties that have an interest in the project.

Other requirements:
☐ Ensure community-based project titles submitted in the database, in the prioritized request letter and in the certification letter are all identical.
☐ Ensure all community-based project titles include the city (or county as applicable) and two letter state designation in which the project would be located.
☐ Ensure your community-based project prioritization list entered into the database is identical to the prioritization in your Member's request letter.
☐ Ensure that the name and location listed for each proposed community-based project in the database are also noted in certification letter.
☐ Please make every effort to indicate if one of your community-based projects is also being requested by another member.

Additional guidance on Community Project Funding requests for eligible accounts:

Department of Agriculture Community Facilities Grants

Grants to purchase, construct, or improve essential community facilities, to purchase equipment, and pay other related project expenses. Essential community facilities include, but are not limited to, healthcare facilities, public facilities, public safety measures, educational services, or other community support services. Examples of eligible projects include; medical or dental clinics, towns halls, courthouses, childcare centers, police or fire departments, public works vehicles, or distance learning equipment. Any project must serve a rural area as specified in 7 CFR 3570.53, and the Member's request must demonstrate community support.

Such requests are also subject to the maximum grant assistance limitations specified in 7 CFR 3570.63(b). Community Facilities grants generally cannot be used to pay initial operating expenses or annual recurring expenses, refinance existing debt, pay interest, build or repair facilities in non-rural areas, or pay for construction costs of facilities that will be used for commercial rental space.

Department of Agriculture ReConnect Program

ReConnect broadband pilot grants facilitate broadband deployment in rural areas. Grants funds can be used for the costs of construction, improvement, or acquisition of facilities and equipment needed to

provide broadband service to rural areas without sufficient broadband access, defined as 10 Mbps downstream and 1 Mbps upstream.

The area must be rural and lack sufficient access to broadband service. A rural area is any area which is not located within: (1) A city, town, or incorporated area that has a population of greater than 20,000 inhabitants; or (2) an urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to a city or town that has a population of greater than 50,000 inhabitants. Sufficient access to broadband is defined as greater than 90% of any rural area in which households have fixed, terrestrial broadband service delivering at least 10 Mbps downstream and 1 Mbps upstream. Mobile and satellite services will not be considered in making the determination of sufficient access to broadband.

Stand-alone middle-mile projects are not eligible under the ReConnect Program. However, middle-mile facilities are eligible if they are needed to bring sufficient broadband service to all premises in the area.

Members are strongly encouraged to include information in their requests, such as the number of households, businesses, or farms will be served in the area, what the performance of the service to be offered will be, and whether healthcare or educational facilities will be served.

Department of Agriculture Agricultural Research Service, Buildings and Facilities

The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) owns and operates laboratories and facilities across the United States. Many of these laboratories/facilities are decades old, have outlived their functional lifespan, and are badly in need of major repairs, renovation, or replacement. Facility requests must be for ARS-owned facilities or for facilities that will enhance ongoing ARS work. Requests can assist in the acquisition of land, construction, repair, improvement, extension, alteration, and purchase of fixed equipment or facilities as necessary to carry out the agricultural research programs of the Department of Agriculture.

Members are strongly encouraged to provide details on the research to be conducted, why the research is a high priority, as well as details on the modernization and why it is critical in carrying out the research.