

# Farm Bill Priorities

The Farm Bill is an opportunity to improve health care, build rural community economic development, and enhance the overall quality of life in rural communities.

## SUPPORT RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

The USDA Rural Development title supports the backbone of rural communities, from hospitals to child care facilities. Congress must leverage key programs such as the **Community Facilities Loan & Grant Programs** to provide rural hospitals necessary capital and the strengthen economic health of rural areas.

## END RURAL FOOD INSECURITY

Food insecurity impacts more than 1 in 10 rural households, contributing to worse health outcomes for rural residents. Congress must reauthorize and bolster food security programs to help end rural health disparities.


## BUILD RURAL BROADBAND CAPACITY

Broadband access is critical for utilizing telehealth services. Increase support for **Community Connect, ReConnect, Rural Broadband, and Distance Learning & Telemedicine programs** to ensure rural America is connected.

## ELEVATE RURAL HEALTH

Reauthorize the **Rural EMS & Equipment Assistance Program** and continue support for USDA's **Rural Health Liaison**. Congress must also address farmer behavioral health by supporting the **Farm & Ranch Stress Assistance Network** and authorizing a designated agricultural worker mental health crisis hotline.

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## Pass the following legislation as part of the 2025 Farm Bill package

### **S. 1282/H.R. 1417: Rural Healthcare Facilities Technical Assistance Act**

*Sens. Rounds (R-SD) & Welch (D-VT)  
Reps. Jackson (R-TX) & Tokuda (D-HI)*

Authorizes and expands the USDA Hospital Technical Assistance Program to identify and address facility needs to improve financial performance and quality outcomes.

### **H.R. 3119: ReConnecting Rural America Act**

*Rep. Nunn (R-IA) & Vasquez (D-NM)*

Permanently authorizes the ReConnect Program, which deploys broadband to underserved rural communities. This legislation would prioritize unserved, remote rural communities, require minimum broadband speeds, and provide up to 100% grant funding for tribal areas and colonias.

### **Rural Health Care Facilities Revitalization Act (H.R. 5989 in 118th Congress)**

*Reps. Caraveo (D-CO), Moolenaar (R-MI),  
Del. Moylan (R-GU), & Salinas (D-OR)*

Allows hospitals, behavioral health facilities, clinics, and long-term care facilities to use Rural Development assistance to upgrade health IT, refinance debt obligations, and support ancillary needs.

### **Farmers First Act**

**(S. 1736/H.R. 6379 in 118th Congress)**

*Sens. Ernst (R-IA) & Baldwin (D-WI),  
Reps. Feenstra (R-IA) & Costa (D-CA)*

Reauthorizes the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network at \$15 million to provide agricultural communities with mental health resources.

### **H.R. 1906: Rural Wellness Act**

*Reps. Budzinski (D-IL) & Finstad (R-MN)*

Prioritizes behavioral health projects in certain Rural Development grant programs and extends current substance use set-asides and prioritized selection.

### **Strengthening Telehealth and Education for Rural Communities Act (S. 2447 in 118th Congress)**

*Sens. Lummis (R-WY) & Rosen (D-NV)*

Reauthorizes the Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program and removes administrative barriers to make it accessible for more rural communities.

### **National Agricultural Crisis Hotline Act (H.R. 5246 in 118th Congress)**

*Reps. Caraveo (D-CO) & Gonzales (R-TX)*

Creates a 24/7 national crisis hotline tailored to support the mental health needs of farmers, ranchers, farm workers, and families by providing suicide crisis intervention, emotional support, information, and mental health and substance use disorder support services.

