

Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026

On February 13, Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, Representative G.T. Thompson (R-PA) released the Majority's 2026 Farm Bill, the [*Farm, Food, and National Security Act*](#).

Please find a section-by-section summary [here](#). NRHA's Farm Bill priorities can be found [here](#). For more background on the farm bill and rural health, please see the 2025 NRHA Policy Papers [A bold vision for rural America: Making the Farm Bill work for health and prosperity](#) and [Nourishing rural America: Policy pathways for food and nutrition security](#). If you have any questions, contact Alexa McKinley Abel (amckinley@ruralhealth.us).

Key provisions are highlighted below. All programs are reauthorized through fiscal year 2031.

Six rural health wins that NRHA advocated for are included in the proposed version of the text.

Title VI: Rural Development.

1. Direct Technical Assistance for Vulnerable Rural Health Providers.

Inclusion of language based on [H.R. 1417](#), the ***Rural Health Care Facility Technical Assistance (TA) Program Act***, that codifies and strengthens the existing hospital TA program with the intention to continue fulfilling its current responsibilities focusing on preventing closures, strengthening essential health services, and improving the financial and operational sustainability of rural health care facilities. Eligible entities are expanded to include hospitals, critical access hospitals, rural emergency hospitals, rural health clinics, community health centers, home health agencies, and psychiatric hospitals. The Program helps rural facilities prevent closure, strengthen essential health care services, and improve financial performance. Priority for eligible facilities would be given to borrowers and grantees of the Rural Housing Service, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, and Rural Utilities Service. The program is authorized at \$2 million for each fiscal year 2026 through 2030.

2. Investment in Rural Broadband

Proposes to integrate the ReConnect Program into the Farm Bill Broadband Program, now renamed **the ReConnect Rural Broadband Program**. NRHA recommended this in our [Farm Bill letter](#) to House and Senate Agriculture Committee leadership. This bill would raise minimum eligibility speeds to 50/25 Mbps. To qualify for a loan, 75% of the proposed service area must lack 50/25 Mbps and to qualify for a grant, 90% of the proposed service area must lack 50/25 Mbps. In addition, highest priority would be given to unserved rural areas that have less than 25/3 Mbps connectivity. Many concepts from NRHA-endorsed [H.R. 3119](#), the *ReConnecting Rural America Act*, were adopted in this proposal.

Bill text also proposes to sunset ReConnect and require unobligated dollars from ReConnect to be transferred to the new ReConnect Rural Broadband Program. This provision is based on concepts found in [H.R. 3216](#) (118th Congress) and [H.R. 3119](#) (119th Congress) and authorizes the ReConnect Rural Broadband Program at \$350 million per year for five years.

Reauthorizes the **Community Connect Grant Program** at \$50 million per year based on [H.R. 6070](#). Community Connect provides grants for the construction of retail broadband networks used to furnish free internet at participating community facilities and other free access points for at least two years, in addition to retail service.



Reauthorizes the **Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Program** at \$82 million per year. This provision is based on language in NRHA-endorsed [H.R. 290](#), the *Rural Telehealth and Education Enhancement Act*, and provides grants to eligible entities for the construction of broadband facilities and equipment related to telepresence activities.

In order to help entities apply for broadband loans and grants, this bill codifies the **Broadband Technical Assistance Program**. Eligible entities are tribes, state or local governments, U.S. territories, universities, nonprofit organizations, corporations, LLCs, and LLPs, based on concepts found in [H.R. 3119](#), [H.R. 3125](#), and [H.R. 3280](#).

3. Support for Rural Behavioral Health

Continued the 20% set-aside in the DLT Program and prioritization in the Community Facilities Loan and Grant (CFL) Program for projects that offer substance use disorder are extended. The bill also adds a 20% set-aside in DLT and prioritization in CFL for “mental health, behavioral health, and maternal health treatment services.” This section includes concepts from NRHA-supported [H.R. 1906](#), the *Rural Wellness Act*.

4. Rural Workforce Development

The Rural Innovation Stronger Economy (RISE) Grant Program is reauthorized at \$10 million per year for five years. This program offers flexible grant funding for rural areas to maximize job opportunities and support private investment in regional economies. [H.R. 291](#), supported by NRHA, is incorporated into this section to **provide funding for career pathway programs and sector partnerships in various industries including health care and childcare**.

The bill also includes [H.R. 5363](#), the *Expanding Childcare in Rural America Act*. This provision would require USDA to prioritize projects within CFL that address the availability, quality, and cost of childcare in agricultural and rural communities.

5. Nutrition Programs for Rural Agriculture and Food Security

Title IV: Nutrition. In response to the reforms included in [H.R. 1](#), this bill prioritizes innovation and improves access to nutrition programs that support farmers and neighbors in need.

The legislation includes several new Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provisions:

- Codifies reforms to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs) for 2025-2030, prioritizing whole, high-quality protein and expands SNAP healthy incentives to include animal protein.
- Expands the reach and impact of the SNAP dairy incentive program by including full-fat fluid milk and hard cheeses, as seen in [H.R. 2496](#).
- Refocuses the purpose of SNAP as defined in the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to a program that promotes a healthy lifestyle, and calls attention to diet-related chronic disease that has impacted military readiness, health care costs, and increased disability claims.

Language also prioritizes and improves access to the following nutrition programs:

- Expands the offerings of the Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP), as seen in [H.R. 293](#).
- Strengthens the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) by improving year-round availability of incentives through the use of all forms of produce (frozen, fresh, canned,

and dried) and by waiving the federal match in counties with high poverty rates, each championed via [H.R. 1782](#) and [H.R. 4856](#) (118th Congress).

- Includes language mandating that USDA make the SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot a permanent shopping option nationwide, as seen in [H.R. 7469](#).

This text also includes new accountability measures for the USDA. New provisions include:

- All identified SNAP payment errors, regardless of dollar amount, in a supplemental annual report, as inspired by [H.R. 762](#).
- Requires the Government Accountability Office to investigate SNAP administrative costs in states with high costs.
- Allows states to make more decisions about the administration of certain aspects of SNAP, as seen in [H.R. 2811](#).

6. Addresses Agriculture Mental Health

Title VII: Research, Extension, and Related Matters

The **Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network** (FRSAN) is reauthorized with new improvements pulled from [H.R. 4400](#), *Farmers First Act*, and [H.R. 5246](#), the *National Agricultural Crisis Hotline Act* (118th Congress). FRSAN grant recipients would be encouraged to make referrals to rural health clinics, critical access hospitals, certified community behavioral health clinics, and federally qualified health centers. Additionally, new language clarifies that grant awards may be used to provide behavioral health counseling and other assistance through crisis hotlines.

Additionally, the Rural Health Liaison is ordered to coordinate with USDA in implementing FRSAN and submit a report to the Agriculture Committee on their activities in this area.