

**State Services for the Blind**

**Resource Guide**

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# **Introduction**

This guide is a resource for you to access community assistance to support your job search and daily living needs. For additional assistance, the following comprehensive resources will support you in finding the resources to best meet your needs.

### United Way 2-1-1

 #211

A free and confidential helpline available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week providing information and referral services to community resources.

### Disability Linkage Line

#1-866-333-2466

Operated by the Minnesota Center for Independent Living (MCIL) providing information about community resources related to persons with disabilities.

### Senior Linkage Line

#1-800-333-2433

A free information helpline for older adults and caregivers about service supporting independent living. Also provides information for persons of all ages about lowering prescription costs.

### MinnesotaHelp.info

 <https://minnesotahelp.info/Index> / #1-800-333-2433

 Assistance with navigating over 10,000 helping agencies in Minnesota.

### Minnesota Recovery Connection

 <http://www.minnesotarecovery.org/resources/index.html>

While this agency is focused on addition recovery, their website offers resources that many individuals can benefits from whether they experience addition or not.

# **State Services for the Blind & Vocational Rehabilitation Services Community Partners**

### Community Partners with SSB

<http://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/blind-visual-impaired/partners>

A list of adjustment to blindness trainers, job search and placement service providers and tactile ASL interpreters contracted with State Services for the Blind (SSB).

### Community Partners with VRS

<http://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/disabilities/partners>

A list of community rehabilitation providers, centers for independent living, limited-use service providers contracted with Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

#

# **Social Security & Benefits**

### Disability Benefits 101 (DB 101)

<https://mn.db101.org/> #1-866-333-2466

Provides tools and information on health coverage, benefits, and employment allowing you to plan ahead about how work and benefits go together.

### Minnesota Work Incentives Connection

<http://www.goodwilleasterseals.org/site/PageNavigator/services/serv_other_workincentives.html>

#1-800-976-6728 / 651-632-5113 (MN Relay – 711)

Provides specialized answers about the impact of work on government benefits.

### Bridge to Benefits

<http://mn.bridgetobenefits.org>

An online tool that will help you identify which County services and public work support programs you may potentially qualify to receive.

### Social Security Administration

[www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov)

#### Ticket to Work – Employment Networks

A free and voluntary program that can help Social Security beneficiaries to gain employment. Ticket to work can be used at many approved Employment Network providers. Minnesota EN providers can be found at <http://www.chooseworkttw.net/findhelp/result?searchString=Minnesota>

#### PASS Plan

The Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS) may be available to SSI recipients in setting aside income and resources to pursue a work goal. <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityresearch/wi/pass.htm>

#### MA-EPD

Medical Assistance for Employed Persons with Disabilities (MA-EPD) may be available for working individuals to assist them in maintaining health coverage. <http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=id_004088>

#### BWE/IRWE

Blind Work Expenses (BWE) and Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE) allow you to deduct certain expenses when declaring income for SSI. <http://www.ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/wi/detailedinfo.htm>

#

# **Job Seeking Resources**

## **Job Postings**

### Indeed

<http://www.indeed.com/>

A comprehensive online job search engine.

### MN Works

<https://www.minnesotaworks.net/>

Online Minnesota job bank for job seekers and employers.

### Minnesota Council of Nonprofits – Job Board

<http://www.minnesotanonprofits.org/jobs>

Job search website strictly for nonprofit organizations in Minnesota. Includes internship, volunteer and board member opportunities as well as full and part-time positions.

### Minnesota State Jobs

<https://statejobs.doer.state.mn.us/JobPosting>

Job openings with the State of Minnesota.

### USA JOBS

<https://www.usajobs.gov/>

The US Federal government official jobs list.

### Schedule A Authority– Federal Positions

<http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/publications/abc_applicants_with_disabilities.cfm>

Schedule A Authority streamlines the hiring process of persons with disabilities for federal job openings.

### Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP)

<https://tapability.org/>

National website connecting businesses looking to hire individuals with disabilities to job seekers with disabilities.

## **Interview Clothing**

### Ready for Success

<http://readyforsuccessmn.org/> #612-872-1509 / info@readyforsuccess.org

Provides low-income men and women with gently used professional clothing, accessories and personal care items for job interviews and the workplace.

### Dress for Success

<https://twincities.dressforsuccess.org> / #651-646-6000

Provides interview clothing and career development services to low-income women.

## **Job Search Skills/Career Exploration**

### SSB Podcasts

 <http://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/blind-visual-impaired/employment/index.jsp>

Podcasts offering helpful advice and insights for job seekers and workers trying to advance their careers.

### iSEEK

<http://www.iseek.org>

Minnesota’s official online resource for career exploration, education and training, and employment information.

### MN WorkForce Centers

<http://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/workforce-centers/>

WorkForce Centers are located around the state of Minnesota and help job seekers find employment by offering classes, workshops, hands-on training and one-on-one consultation.

### CareerOneStop

[www.careeronestop.org](http://www.careeronestop.org)

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.

### O\*Net Online

[www.online.onetcenter.org](http://www.online.onetcenter.org)

Provides detailed descriptions of different jobs including tasks, work environment, education required, salary, future outlook, and more.

### RESOURCE

 <http://www.resource-mn.org/>

Offers employment services, career education and training programs as well as chemical and mental health services.

## **Self-Employment**

### WomenVenture

<http://www.womenventure.org> / #612-224-9540

A nonprofit organization offering support to women-owned businesses with classes, loans and networking opportunities.

### DEED Starting a Business

<http://mn.gov/deed/business/starting-business/>

A link to the DEED Positively MN website for information on starting a business in MN with information in areas such as accounting, taxes, finding workers, business planning and more.

### U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)

<http://www.sba.gov>

Offers free online self-employment courses, loans and grants, local assistance and additional resources.

### Alternative Resources for Business Funding

<http://mn.gov/deed/business/financing-business/>

A list of grants and loan options for funding a business.

### SCORE

 <http://minneapolis.score.org/onlineworkshops/tab-a>

A nonprofit association that helps small business to startup, grow, and achieve goals. They provide mentoring, counseling, tools, and workshops/webinars. Services are either free or low cost because they are funded through US Small Business Administration (SBA) and also through volunteers.

#

# **Assistive Technology and Aids**

### EyeLink Foundation

<http://www.eye-link.org>

Provides grants for assistive technology devices to Minnesotans experiencing significant vision loss.

### Computers for the Blind (CFTB)

<http://www.computersfortheblind.net>

Volunteer organization dedicated to providing accessible computers to persons who are blind or visually impaired.

### PCs for People

<http://www.pcsforpeople.com/>

Provides refurbished computers at a low-cost to qualifying low-income persons. Locations in St. Paul, Mankato, Grand Rapids and Brainerd.

### MN STAR Program

<http://mn.gov/admin/star/>

#1-888-234-1267 / #651-201-2640

A System of Technology to Achieve Results (STAR) helps all Minnesotans with disabilities gain access to and acquire the assistive technology needed to live, learn, work and play.

### Free White Cane Programs

The National Federation of the Blind (NFB) offers a free white cane program through their online application at <https://nfb.org/free-cane-program>

The American Action Fund for Blind Children and Adults (AAF) offers a free white cane program by contacting them at #410-659-9315.

### Free Federal Government Cell Phone Programs

The federal government offers free mobile phones to qualified individuals. There are three major companies that are contracted to provide this service and they may offer different amounts of voice and text minutes.

Safelink Wireless: [www.safelinkwireless.com](http://www.safelinkwireless.com)

Assurance Wireless: [www.assurancewireless.com](http://www.assurancewireless.com)

Budget Mobile: [www.budgetmobile.com](http://www.budgetmobile.com)

#

# **Education**

### MN Literacy Council

<http://www.mnliteracy.org/hotline>

#1-800-222-1990 / #612-424-1211 (text)

Hotline to locate free adult classes in Minnesota for ESL, GED, Math, Computers, Reading, College Prep, Citizenship, and Career Training.

## **GED**

### MyGED

<https://ged.com/>

Learn about the GED test, get study materials, and find a testing location.

### MN Department of Education

 <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/AdultEd/>

Provides information about Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes and General Educational Development (GED) test in Minnesota.

## **ESL**

### Conversation Circles

Sponsored by the MN Literacy Council, offers free group opportunities to practice English at local libraries.

Hennepin County Library: 612-543-8000

In Hmong: 612-543-8845

In Somali: 612-543-8756

In Spanish: 612-543-8510

### Minneapolis Adult Education – South Campus

2225 East Lake Street, Minneapolis - #612-668-3800

Offers free ESL classes and day care may be available to qualified families.

### Cedar Riverside Adult Ed Collaborative

1515 S 4th Street, Box 2009, Minneapolis - #612-376-7664

Provides free classes in citizenship, computers, ESL, reading and math to Somali immigrants.

## **General Studies**

### Hadley School for the Blind

<http://www.hadley.edu/Findacourse.asp>

Hadley School for the Blind offers online education opportunities for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Many of the adult education classes are free.

### Blind Computer Users Group

Meets September to May, contact Bill at bill.herzog@hennepin.us for more information.

## **College Support**

### Learning Ally – College Success Program

[www.learningally.org/](http://www.learningally.org/)

Offers a college success program supporting college students who are blind or visually impaired.

### University of Minnesota Tuition Waiver

[**http://onestop.umn.edu/finances/financial\_aid/grants\_and\_waivers/special\_for/disabilities.html**](http://onestop.umn.edu/finances/financial_aid/grants_and_waivers/special_for/disabilities.html)

Information on the tuition waiver for students who are legally blind as well as information on additional financial aid opportunities.

### SSB Communication Center

<http://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/blind-visual-impaired/braille/index.jsp>

The Communication Center at State Services for the Blind (SSB) provides books, newspapers, magazines and other printed materials in alternative formats for people who have disabilities that make it difficult to read print.

### Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D)

[www.nationaltechcenter.org/conference2010/content/RFBD/RFBD\_Technology\_Conf\_Flyer\_3.pdf](http://www.nationaltechcenter.org/conference2010/content/RFBD/RFBD_Technology_Conf_Flyer_3.pdf)

A national nonprofit that provides accessible educational materials for individuals with visual and learning disabilities.

### Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

<http://www.fafsa.edu.gov>

Application for financial aid during post-secondary education.

#

# **Immigration**

### International Institute of Minnesota

<http://www.iimn.org> / #651-647-0191x307

Assistance in completing various immigration procedures.  Nominal fee, appointment required.

### African Development Center of Minnesota

<http://www.adcminnesota.org/> #612-333-4772

Outreach for immigrants from Africa for housing, employment, and advocacy.

### Minnesota Council of Churches

<http://www.mnchurches.org> / #612-870-3600

Offers Family Reunification Program, Green Card, Citizenship and other immigration services.

### World Relief Minnesota

<http://www.worldreliefmn.org> / #612-866-0462

Offers immigration legal services to low-income refugees, asylees and immigrants.

### Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota

<http://www.ilcm.org> / #651-641-1011

Help completing forms, filing with USCIS, representation at Asylum Interviews, representation before Immigration Court, representation before the Board of Immigration Appeals, and Federal Court appeals.

#

# **Community Resources**

## **General Assistance**

### Lutheran Social Services

[www.lss.mn.org](http://www.lss.mn.org) / #1-800-582-5260

Offers a wide range of services to persons in need including counseling, community supports, food, and shelter.

### Catholic Charities

<http://www.cctwincities.org>

Provides food, shelter, housing and other services to those in need.

### Salvation Army

<http://www.salvationarmyusa.org/>

Provides many support services for adults, children and families as well as international and disaster relief.

## **Medical**

### Goodwill Easter Seals

<http://www.goodwilleasterseals.org/site/PageServer?pagename=serv_other_medequip>

Short-term loan for medical equipment for people in need free of charge.

### People’s Center

[www.peoples-center.org](http://www.peoples-center.org) / #612-332-4973

Offers sliding fee scales, accepts Medicare/Medicaid, and provides medical, dental and behavioral health services.

## **Dental**

Medicare will cover dental procedures only if necessary as a preparation for a medical procedures or required to protect your general health. Opportunities for lower costs may be available based on a sliding fee scale.

## **Eye Care**

### Philips Eye Institute

[www.allinahealth.org/Phillips-Eye-Insitute](http://www.allinahealth.org/Phillips-Eye-Insitute) / #612-775-8800

Free standing eye specialty center associated with Mount Sinai Medical Center.

### University of Minnesota Physicians – Eye Clinic

<http://www.mincep.com/Clinics/eye-clinic/index.htm> / #612-625-4400

Provides specialty eye care through a partnership between Fairview and University of Minnesota Physicians.

## **Mental Health & Substance Abuse**

### Crisis Connection

#612-379-6363

Emergency mental health phone counseling available 24 a day, 7 days a week.

### NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness

<http://www.nami.org>

Provides support to individuals and families affected by mental illness through advocacy, classes, and education.

### Walk-In Counseling Center

<http://www.walkin.org>

Provides free mental health counseling to people through a staff of volunteer clinicians.

### MN Department of Humans Services

<http://www.dhs.state.mn.us>

#651-431-2000 / TTY: 1-800-627-3529

Gives information on certified providers for mental health and substance abuse services.

### ARMHS (Adult Rehabilitative Mental Health Services)

 <http://www.dhs.state.mn.us>

Provides in-home services supporting independent living skills and mental health symptom management. For a list of certified providers, visit the Department of Human Services:

### Mental Health Minnesota Formerly MHAM

 Asktheguides@mentalhealthmn.org / [www.mental healthmn.org](https://connect.mn.gov/sites/DEED/CARD/CommunicationRequests/Lists/CommunicationRequests/Attachments/646/www.mental%20healthmn.org) / #800-862-1799

Non-profit advocacy and education supporting individuals with mental illness.

### Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)

[www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org) / #952-922-0880 (Help Line)

Offers support to men and women of any age who want to address their drinking problem.

### Narcotics Anonymous (NA)

[www.naminnesota.org](http://www.naminnesota.org) / #877-767-7676 (Help Line)

Offers support to men and women for whom drugs have become a major problem.

### Al-Anon

<http://www.al-anon.alateen.org/>

Support group for friends and family’s impacted by persons experiencing drinking problems.

## **Housing**

### HousingLink

<http://www.housinglink.org/Home.aspx>

Online search engine for affordable housing opportunities in Minnesota.

### Accessible Space

<http://www.accessiblespace.org/>

Provides affordable, subsidized housing for adults with disabilities and seniors. Also offers assisted living services to support independence.

### CommonBond

<http://www.commonbond.org>

Midwest nonprofit provider of affordable housing to families, seniors and persons with disabilities. Also offers services for youth engagement, independent living, and family support.

## **Shelters**

### Metro Shelter Hotline

#1-888-234-1329

Provides information about emergency shelter and transitional housing for single adults, families and youth in the 7 county metro area.

### Shelter Listings

 <http://www.shelterlistings.org/state/minnesota.html>

 Website providing a list of shelters and low-income housing in the US by state and city.

### Tubman

 <http://www.tubman.org> / 612-825-0000

Helps women, men, youth and families who have experienced relationship violence, elder abuse, addiction, sexual exploitation or other forms of trauma including safe shelter and counseling.

### Dorothy Day Center

 183 Old 6th St W, St. Paul, MN 55102 / #651-647-2350

Provides shelter, meals, showers, mental health assistance and chemical health support groups to people experiencing homelessness.

## **Transportation**

### Metro Mobility

<http://www.metrocouncil.org/Transportation/Services/Metro-Mobility.aspx> / #651-602-1111

Shared public transportation services for certified users who are unable to use regular fixed-route buses due to disability or health condition in the Twin Cities. Application must be submitted.

### Arrowhead Transit

<http://arrowheadtransit.com> / #1-800-862-0175

Provides scheduled and Dial-A-Ride transportation services to Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, St. Louis, and Pine Counties. Also operates Rural Rides promoting ride sharing and volunteer driver service connections.

### The Lift Garage

#612-866-5840 / 5925 Nicollet Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN 55419

Provides car repairs for low-income households.

### Wheel Get There

# 1-800-767-7139x2446

Sells vehicles to persons experiencing low income at a discounted price ($400 to $600 for short-term vehicles and $600+ for longer lasting cars).

## **Financial Support**

### Need Help Paying Bills

<http://needhelppayingbills.com>

Offers information about local community resources providing assistance on medical expenses, utility bills, rental programs, food pantries, clothing closets, loans and more.

### Energy Assistance Program (EAP)

 [www.mn.gov/commerce/energy/consumers/Heating-Assistance](http://www.mn.gov/commerce/energy/consumers/Heating-Assistance)

Assists with home heating costs and furnace repairs for income-qualified households, federally funded through the US Department of Health and Human Services.

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# **DeafBlind**

### Minnesota Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS)

#651-431-5940 (V) / #651-964-1514 (VP)

Provides information, resources, and empowerment opportunities to assist deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing Minnesotans of any age.

### Minnesota DeafBlind Association (MDBA)

<http://www.deafnonprofit.net/mdba> / #651-647-6564

The only organization serving DeafBlind people in Minnesota that is governed by DeafBlind people, sponsors leadership meetings, community workshops and special events.

### DeafBlind Services of Minnesota (DBSM)

<http://www.dbsmllc.org> / #612-362-8454 (V) #952-338-2102 (VP) #612-362-8422 (TTY)

DBSM provides services statewide to people who are deafblind including children, youth and family services (CYFS), adult community services (ACS), independent living skills, adjustment to blindness/deafblindness, and pro-tactile training. DBSM is a limited liability corporation of Vision Loss Resources.

### Helen Keller National Center (HKNC)

<http://www.hknc.org> / #516-944-8900

Offers training and education to deafblind individuals at their center in New York.

### Telephone Equipment Distribution (TED) Program

#800-657-3663 (V) #866-635-0082 (VP) #888-206-6555 (TTY)

Provides telephone equipment on free long-term loan to people who are deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, speech impaired or have a physical disability requiring adaptive equipment to use the phone.

### ICanConnect

 <http://www.icanconnect.org> / 800-825-4595(V) 888-320-2656 (TTY)

Offers free distance communication technologies, training, and resources if you have a significant combined vision and hearing loss and meet federal income guidelines.

# **Veterans**

### U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

<http://www.va.gov/>

Provides federal benefits including medical, employment, and financial assistance to veterans and their dependents. Blind Rehabilitation Services are also provided through the VA health care system.

### Disabled American Veterans

[www.da.org](http://www.da.org)

Empowers veterans with disabilities to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity.

### Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)

[www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org)

Organization encouraging fellowships amongst veterans and provides services to build communities and support veterans.

### The American Legion

[www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org)

Organization of veterans that focuses on providing services to strengthen communities and assist veterans and service members.

# **Youth**

### Foundational Skills

<http://mn.gov/deed/images/Transition%20Timeline%20Foundation%20Skills%20LP%206_14.pdf>

A list of 17 foundational skills expected of all workers in the high-performance workplace of the 21st century.

### Post-Secondary Resource Guide

<http://www.normandale.edu/Documents/osd/Resource_Guide-Reduced_Size.pdf>

Developed in collaboration between Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) to aid high school students making the transition to college.

### Special Education Cooperatives

School districts join together to provide services to students with disabilities up to the age of 21.

### Rum River Special Education Cooperative

<https://sites.google.com/a/rumriverspecialed.k12.mn.us/rum-river/> #763-552-7733

### Northern Lights Special Education Cooperative

<http://www.nlsec.k12.mn.us/> #218-879-1283

### Area Special Education Cooperative

 <http://www.asec.net/> #218-773-0315

### SouthWest Metro Educational Cooperative

 <http://www.swmetro.k12.mn.us/> #952-567-8104

### Minnesota Office of Youth Development

<http://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development> / #651-259-7555

Provides training, employment and education programs to support Minnesota youth in developing skills needed to succeed in the workplace.

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# **Seniors**

### Minnesota Board on Aging

<http://www.mnaging.org/>

Provides information related to services for seniors and their families.

### MNLivewellAtHome.org

 <http://mnlivewellathome.org/>

 Information to help older Minnesotans live at home as long as possible.

### SSB Senior Services Unit

<http://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/blind-visual-impaired/seniors/index.jsp>

The Senior Services Unit of State Services for the Blind (SSB) offers counseling, training and referrals to help seniors and persons unable to work to find ways to adapt to changes in their vision and improve their quality of life.

# **Ex-Offenders**

### Minnesota Public Criminal History

<https://cch.state.mn.us/>

Information maintained by the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension that is free and public. Includes offense, court of conviction, date of the conviction and sentence information. Data on criminal convictions is public for 15 years following the completion of the sentence. Information not available includes arrest data, juvenile data, criminal history data from other states, federal data, data on convictions where 15 years or more have elapsed since the completion of the sentence, and other data deemed private or confidential.

### EMERGE

<http://www.emerge-mn.org> / #612-529-9267

Supports individuals facing significant obstacles to redefine themselves through employment services, financial coaching and supportive housing.

### AMICUS

<http://www.amicususa.org> / #612-877-4250

The RECONNECT program offers a variety of services designed to assist offenders in building new lives before and after release. Also hosts a free, weekly support group for men and women.

### Council on Crime and Justice Expungement Assistance

#612-353-3024

Provides legal assistance in expunging criminal records to qualified individuals.

# **Guide Dog Schools**

### Resource List

<https://nfb.org/resource-list-guide-dog-schools>

A list of schools that offer guide dogs across the US.

### ADA Rules and Guidelines

 <http://www.ada.gov/regs2010/service_animal_qa.html>

Frequently asked questions regarding Adults with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations for service animals.

# **Advocacy**

### Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

[www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov)

Information and technical assistance regarding the laws/regulations, standards and enforcement of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

### Jan Entrepreneurship Guide

 <http://askjan.org/entre/>

A link to the Job Accommodation Network’s guide to entrepreneurship specific to people with disabilities.

### National Disability Institute

<http://realeconomicimpact.org/about-us>

Advocacy organization with a focus on social impact to build a better economic future for people with disabilities and their families.

### National Federation for the Blind

[www.nfb.org](http://www.nfb.org)

Advocacy organization for the individuals who are low-vision or blind.

### American Council of the Blind

[www.acb.org](http://www.acb.org)

Advocacy organization promoting independence, security, equality of opportunity and quality of life for blind and visually impaired persons.

### United Blind of Minnesota, Inc

#952-236-4788

Organization providing social network and legal advocacy for Minnesotans with visual impairments.

### MN Disability Law Center (MDLC)

[www.mylegalaid.org](http://www.mylegalaid.org)

A designated Protection and Advocacy System (P&A) that provides free civil legal assistance to Minnesotans with disabilities. The program is operated under Minnesota Legal Aid.

# **Additional Resources**

### Lions Club

<http://www.lionsclubs.org/EN/index.php>

Service organization who meets community needs with an emphasis on visual impairments.

### Rotary Club

<https://www.rotary.org/>

Volunteer members who identify local, national, or international needs to serve the community.

### USDA Rural Development

<http://www.rd.usda.gov>

Operates over fifty financial assistance programs for a variety of rural applications including housing, small business development, and utilities.