

April 2021



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

GovDelivery

Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)

- [Maui County Producers May be Eligible for Emergency Conservation Program Assistance](#)
- [USDA Announces Funding Available to Organizations to Assist Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers under Pandemic Assistance for Producers Initiative](#)
- [USDA Supports Military Veteran's Transition to Farming](#)
- [American Rescue Plan Socially Disadvantaged Farmer Debt Payments](#)
- [HealthCare.gov Insurance Enrollment Available through May 15](#)
- [April 2021 Interest Rates](#)
- [USDA Service Centers Provide Free, One-on-One Help for Farmers](#)
- [Sign Up Today for Text Alerts from FSA](#)

Table of Contents

Hawaii & Pacific Basin FSA State Office

PJKK Federal Building
P.O. Box 50065
300 Ala Moana Blvd, Rm 5-108
Honolulu, HI 96850

Phone: 808-541-2600 x 2
FAX: 855-356-9493

Acting State Executive Director:
Shirley Nakamura

Acting Chief Program Specialist:
Kristen Kiriu

Maui County Producers May be Eligible for Emergency Conservation Program Assistance

Recent March 2021 flooding has caused severe damage in east and south areas of Maui County.

If you've suffered severe damage, you may be eligible for assistance under the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) administered by the Maui County Farm Service Agency (FSA)

For land to be eligible, the natural disaster must create new conservation problems that, if untreated, would:

Chief, Farm Loan Program:
Theresa Correa

Upcoming County Committee Meetings:

Hawaii County Committee
May 7, 2021 at 8:30am

Honolulu County Committee
April 16, 2021 at 3:30pm

Maui County Committee
April 15, 2021 at 8:30 am

Kauai County Committee
April 21, 2021 at 9:00 am

Guam County Committee
April 20, 2021 at 9:00 am

CNMI County Committee
April 21, 2021 at 9:00 am

Contact the County Office to confirm meeting date and time, as budget constraints may limit the County Committee's ability to meet each month.

Click here for a list of County Offices, contact numbers and addresses: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Hawaii/service-centers/index>

Website for Hawaii and Pacific Basin
FSA: www.fsa.usda.gov/hi

- be so costly to rehabilitate that Federal assistance is or will be needed to return the land to productive agricultural use
- is unusual and is not the type that would recur frequently in the same area
- affect the productive capacity of the farmland
- impair or endanger the land

If you qualify for ECP assistance, you may receive cost-share levels not to exceed 75 percent of the eligible cost of restoration measures. Eligible socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers and ranchers can receive up to 90 percent of the eligible cost of restoration. No one is eligible for more than \$500,000 cost sharing per natural disaster occurrence.

If you've suffered a loss from a natural disaster you may contact the local FSA Maui County Office and request assistance from April 1, 2021 to April 30, 2021.

To be eligible for assistance, practices must not be started until all the following are met:

- an application for cost-share assistance has been filed
- the local FSA County Committee (COC) or its representative has conducted an onsite inspection of the damaged area
- the Agency responsible for technical assistance, such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), has made a needs determination, which may include cubic yards of earthmoving, etc., required for rehabilitation

For more information about ECP, contact your Maui County USDA Service Center at (808) 871-5500 ext 2 or visit fsa.usda.gov.

USDA Announces Funding Available to Organizations to Assist Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers under Pandemic Assistance for Producers Initiative

FSA Accepting CFAP 2 Applications Beginning April 5

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) announces the availability of \$2 million to establish partnerships with organizations to provide outreach and technical assistance to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. The funding was made possible by USDA's new Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative, an effort to distribute resources more

broadly and to put greater emphasis on outreach to small and socially disadvantaged producers impacted by the pandemic.

FSA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) signup will reopen on April 5, 2021, as part of the Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative. Farmers and ranchers will have at least 60 days to apply or make modifications to existing CFAP 2 applications.

Cooperative Agreements The cooperative agreements will support participation in programs offered by FSA, including those that are part of USDA's Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative. Interested organizations must submit proposals by May 5, 2021.

Outreach and technical assistance cooperative agreements support projects that:

- Increase access and participation of socially disadvantaged applicants in FSA programs and services.
- Improve technical assistance for socially disadvantaged applicants related to county committees focused on urban agriculture as well as FSA programs, including loan, disaster assistance, conservation and safety-net programs.

FSA will prioritize review of proposals that support outreach on CFAP 2. To ensure effective outreach during the signup period for CFAP 2, these applications will be reviewed immediately following the submission deadline for prioritized approval and project initiation.

This funding opportunity is available to non-profits having a 501(c)(3) status with the Internal Revenue Service (other than institutions of higher education), Federally recognized Native American tribal governments, Native American tribal organizations (other than Federally recognized tribal governments), and public and state-controlled institutions of higher education, including 1890 land grant institutions and 1994 tribal land-grant colleges and universities.

Awards will range from \$20,000 to \$99,999 for a duration between six months and one year. Applications focusing primarily on CFAP 2 will be expedited. For other proposals, FSA anticipates announcing or notifying successful and unsuccessful applicants by June 20, 2021 and expects to have Federal awards in place by September 1, 2021.

For more information, view the cooperative agreement opportunity on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) (No. USDA-FSA-MULTI-21-NOFO0001104) or visit fsa.usda.gov/cooperativeagreements.

Reopening of CFAP 2 CFAP 2 provides financial assistance that gives producers the ability to absorb increased marketing costs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Eligible commodities include specialty crops, livestock, dairy, row crops, aquaculture, floriculture and nursery crops. The initial CFAP 2 signup ended on Dec. 11, 2020, but USDA will reopen sign-up for CFAP 2 for at least 60 days beginning today. Visit farmers.gov/cfap for details on all eligible commodities, producer eligibility, payment limitations and structure and additional program resources.

Producers have multiple options to apply for CFAP 2, including through an online application portal and by working directly with the FSA office at their local USDA Service Center. Customers seeking one-on-one support with the CFAP 2 application process can call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance. This is a recommended first step before a producer engages with the team at the FSA county office.

Additional CFAP Actions

USDA will also finalize routine decisions and minor formula adjustments on applications and begin processing payments for certain applications filed as part of the CFAP Additional Assistance. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, enacted December 2020 requires FSA to make certain payments to producers according to a mandated formula.

While USDA offices are currently closed to visitors because of the pandemic, Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. To conduct business, please contact your local [USDA Service Center](#). Additionally, more information related to USDA's response and relief for producers can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

USDA Supports Military Veteran's Transition to Farming

Are you a military veteran interested in farming? USDA offers resources to help you:

- **Fund Your Operation:** USDA's Farm Service Agency offers a variety of funding opportunities to help agricultural producers finance their businesses. Certain funds are targeted for veterans and beginning farmers and ranchers.
- **Conserve Natural Resources:** USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service offers conservation programs and expert one-on-one technical assistance to strengthen agricultural operations now and into the future. Veterans may be eligible for a cost share of up to 90 percent and advance payments of up to 50 percent to cover certain conservation practices.
- **Manage Risks:** USDA is here to help you prepare for and recover from the unexpected. Veterans who are beginning farmers may be eligible for reduced premiums, application fee waivers, increased insurance coverage, and other incentives for multiple USDA programs that support risk management.

USDA wants to ensure that veterans transitioning to agriculture have the resources needed to succeed. While USDA offices are currently closed to visitors because of the pandemic, Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. To conduct business, please contact your local USDA Service Center. Additionally, more information related to USDA's response and relief for producers can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus. If you're a new farmer, you can also reach out to your state Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coordinator.

American Rescue Plan Socially Disadvantaged Farmer Debt Payments

USDA recognizes that socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers have faced systemic discrimination with cumulative effects that have, among other consequences, led to a substantial loss in the number of socially disadvantaged producers, reduced the amount of farmland they control, and contributed to a cycle of debt that was exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, socially disadvantaged communities saw a disproportionate amount of COVID-19 infection rates, loss of property, hospitalizations, death, and economic hurt.

To address these systemic challenges, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 provides historic debt relief to socially disadvantaged producers including Black/African American, American Indian or Alaskan native, Hispanic or Latino, and Asian American or Pacific Islander.

USDA is now reviewing and working to gather feedback to implement the Act, and more guidance will be forthcoming for socially disadvantaged borrowers with direct or guaranteed farm loans as well as Farm Storage Facility Loans. As information becomes available, it will be provided directly to socially disadvantaged borrowers and stakeholder groups representing socially disadvantaged producers, posted here on farmers.gov, and shared through our social media channels, email newsletters, and the media.

Who qualifies for this debt relief?

Any socially disadvantaged borrower with direct or guaranteed farm loans as well as Farm Storage Facility Loans qualifies. The American Rescue Plan Act uses the 2501 definition of socially disadvantaged, which includes Black/African American, American Indian or Alaskan native, Hispanic or Latino, and Asian American or Pacific Islander. Gender is not a criterion in and of itself, but of course women are included in these categories.

I qualify as socially disadvantaged under the American Rescue Plan definition, but I am not late on my payments. Do I still qualify?

Yes. Any socially disadvantaged borrower with direct or guaranteed farm loans as well as Farm Storage Facility Loans qualifies.

When will qualified borrowers begin to see a loan pay-off or other payment in response to the American Rescue Plan?

USDA is now reviewing and working to gather feedback to implement the Act, and more guidance will be forthcoming for socially disadvantaged borrowers with direct or guaranteed farm loans as well as Farm Storage Facility Loans. For borrowers in arrears, the moratorium established on January 26th to stop all debt collections, foreclosures and evictions for all borrowers, including socially disadvantaged producers, remains in effect.

Producers who have worked with USDA's Farm Service Agency previously may have their ethnicity and race on file. A borrower, including those with guaranteed loans, can contact their local their local USDA Service Center to verify, update or submit a new ethnicity and race designation using the AD-2047. Find your nearest service center at farmers.gov/service-locator.

To learn more about USDA's work to implement the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, visit www.usda.gov/arp.

HealthCare.gov Insurance Enrollment Available through May 15

HealthCare.gov has opened a Special Enrollment Period from now through May 15 for people seeking health insurance. You may be eligible for financial assistance or have access to plans of \$50 or less. [Learn more at HealthCare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov).

April 2021 Interest Rates

Farm Operating Loans 1.500%
Farm Ownership Loans 2.875%

Farm Ownership Loans Direct Down Payment for Beginning Farmer or Rancher 1.500%
Emergency Loans 2.500%

USDA Service Centers Provide Free, One-on-One Help for Farmers

At USDA, we are committed to helping farmers complete loan applications, environmental reviews, and other paperwork free of charge. One-on-one support is available at more than 2,300 USDA Service Centers nationwide. USDA's Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service staff are usually co-located at these Service Centers and can help guide farmers to the best USDA assistance based on their unique goals, whether it is loans, conservation programs, or insurance.

Service Center staff can guide farmers through the process of preparing and submitting required paperwork on their own, with no need to hire a paid preparer. Language translation service is available in all USDA Service Centers, so one-on-one assistance with a Service Center employee can be translated in real time for farmers requiring it. And while some program and loan applications do have an administrative fee for filing, there is never a charge for preparation services provided by USDA staff.

Farmers who work with the USDA Service Center can:

- Establish their farm by registering for a farm number, which is required for USDA programs and assistance.
- Learn how to meet conservation compliance provisions.
- Verify eligibility for USDA programs.
- Discuss their business and conservation goals.
- Create a conservation plan.
- Fill out and file loan and program applications.

We are committed to delivering USDA programs and services to America's farmers and ranchers while taking safety measures in response to COVID-19. We encourage you to [check the status of your local USDA Service Center](#) and make an appointment to discuss your business needs.

Sign Up Today for Text Alerts from FSA

Subscribers Can Receive Important Program Reminders and Updates

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) farmers and ranchers now can receive notifications from their county office through text messages on their cell phone.

Whether producers are in the field, on a tractor or even on horseback, this service enables FSA customers and stakeholders to receive notifications while on the go. Producers will receive text messages regarding important program deadlines, reporting requirements, outreach events and updates.

Producers can text the **short codes** below to FSANOW (372-669) to subscribe to text message alerts from their respective counties. Standard text messaging rates apply. Contact your wireless

carrier for details associated with your particular data plan. Participants may unsubscribe at any time.

Hawaii County : **HPBHawaii**
Honolulu County: **HPBHonolulu**
Kauai County: **HPBKauai**
Maui County: **HPBMaui**

Please contact your [local FSA office](#) if you have questions regarding FSA's email news service or the text message option.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).

 SHARE



Questions?
[Contact Us](#)

STAY CONNECTED:



SUBSCRIBER SERVICES:

[Manage Preferences](#) | [Delete Profile](#) | [Help](#)