

Solar United Neighbors Reminds Rural Energy for America Program First 2024 Application Deadline Approaching

Solar United Neighbors offers assistance with Ready, Set, Solar, REAP!

WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, UNITED STATES, February 16, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As part of its mission to help people go solar, national nonprofit Solar United Neighbors (SUN) reminds rural small businesses and farmers that the next deadline to apply for the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) is March 31, 2024.



“

SUN is dedicated to helping anyone who's overwhelmed by the prospect of going solar with real life examples, credible information, and personalized experience.”

Anya Schoolman, Solar United Neighbors Executive Director

“Whether you're a rural small business owner or you own a farm, the Rural Energy for America Program could be your key to unlocking the power of solar energy. Going solar is not just about saving money; it's about enhancing your operational goals, promoting energy independence, and boosting local economies,” said Anya Schoolman, Solar United Neighbors Executive Director.

REAP offers grants and loans to make solar more affordable. These grants are for up to 50% of the system cost and loans are available through a competitive

application process. The Inflation Reduction Act quadrupled funding for the program. The USDA has also increased the number of application windows per year to four (quarterly) through 2024. This means there is more opportunity to secure funding to add solar to farms and rural businesses.

One rural small business owner and farmer that SUN helped with REAP is Eric Glomski with Page Spring Cellars. Page Springs Cellars installed solar panels to reduce energy costs, developed on-site waste processing features, and uses solar-powered well pumps to produce their grapes in

the region's arid climate.

"We couldn't afford to put in the photovoltaics during the early days of building their business," Glomski said. "It's a good investment over time, of course, but we just couldn't afford to take that upfront hit. Starting out, it's always about cash flow. Sure, you'll save money over the longer term, but making that initial investment is tough."

"Then we found out about the REAP grant, it helped us to offset some of those upfront costs, and that defrayed cost meant our investment made sense. It's been a very good thing for building our business," said Glomski.



Eric Glomski, Page Spring Cellars

Since then, Glomski and Page Springs Cellars have received additional REAP grants to make their business more efficient and profitable. In addition to their winery, they've put in solar arrays where they grow some of their grapes in the Chiricahua Mountains of Southeastern Arizona. The wine business has additional pending REAP grants for battery storage systems to help manage regular power outages that have a serious impact on their business. "If we have a power outage on a Saturday during the season, that's \$15,000 we lose," said Glomski.

Glomski utilized SUN's Ready, Set, Solar! REAP Program. The 10-week program walks farmers and rural small business owners through the REAP application process.

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The USDA accepts applications throughout the year and the next deadline is March 31, 2024.

Those interested in assistance can join [Ready, Set, Solar, REAP](https://www.solarunitedneighbors.org/ready-set-solar-rural-businesses/) online:
<https://www.solarunitedneighbors.org/ready-set-solar-rural-businesses/>.

As part of the program participants receive:

- A week of emails introducing the REAP grant process and a [REAP guide](#), followed by an email a week with bite-size to-do's for the remaining nine weeks
- Unbiased, installer-neutral advice and expertise
- Support from a network of peers, including SUN staff and previous REAP grantees

Additional REAP resources provided by SUN include:

-An on-demand webinar 'REAP Solar Grants & Your Rural Business', in English (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=43ckopX_5M8) and Spanish (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q_w6h7u4sGQ)

-REAP guide in English (<https://www.solarunitedneighbors.org/download-our-rural-business-guide/>) & Spanish (<https://www.solarunitedneighbors.org/descarga-nuestra-guia-de-negocios-rurales/>)

-[Solar Help Desk with hands-on support](https://www.solarunitedneighbors.org/go-solar/want-to-install-solar/go-solar-on-your-own/) (<https://www.solarunitedneighbors.org/go-solar/want-to-install-solar/go-solar-on-your-own/>)

-USDA website map to see if a rural business is in an eligible area NOTE: qualifying farms are available regardless of location. (<https://eligibility.sc.egov.usda.gov/eligibility/welcomeAction.do?pageAction=rbs>)

-USDA REAP FAQ at the bottom of the page (<https://www.rd.usda.gov/inflation-reduction-act/rural-energy-america-program-reap>)

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