

RESOURCES FOR HAWAII AGRUCULTURE AND FOOD SUPPLY

UNDER THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN



The ongoing coronavirus pandemic is affecting virtually every aspect of life in Hawaii and across the country. These are challenging and uncertain times, but it's important to recognize and reaffirm that we are all in this together.

As we continue to take the difficult, but necessary steps to confront the spread of COVID-19, Congress has passed meaningful relief for affected families and businesses. The American Rescue Plan, signed into law by President Biden on March 11, 2021, provides billions of dollars in aid for Hawaii's families and communities.

This legislation will help Hawaii re-open schools safely; speed up vaccine distribution; expand access to health care; and provide immediate and long-term relief to those in need.

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The American Rescue Plan provides more than \$5 billion to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to support America's farmers and food sectors. At this time USDA has not announced details for how they will administer these funds, so updates will be provided when available.

Additionally, you can visit <https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus/farmer-resources> to access information and updates on farmer resources.

FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN

USDA will allocate \$3.6 billion for activities that include:

- Purchasing and distributing food and agricultural commodities, which include produce, dairy, seafood, eggs, and meat, to families in need in coordination with nonprofits, restaurants, and other food related entities that may receive, store, process, and distribute food.
- Providing grants and loans to small and midsize food processors/distributors, seafood processing facilities/processing vessels, farmers markets, and producers to respond to and protect workers from COVID-19.
- Providing grants and loans to increase resiliency throughout the food supply chain.

USDA will provide \$100 million to support federally-inspected small and very small meat, poultry, and egg products processors by reducing the amount of overtime inspection costs incurred through fiscal year 2030.

Additionally, USDA will administer \$300 million to monitor COVID-19 in animals.

*These resources are in addition to the \$13 billion provided by Congress in the 2020 end-of-year COVID-19 Emergency Relief Package for direct payments, purchases and loans to farmers and ranchers who have suffered losses due to the pandemic, as well as funds to support the food supply chain through food purchases, donations to food banks, and support for local food systems.

SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED FARMERS AND RANCHERS

USDA will provide farm loan payments equal to 120 percent of outstanding indebtedness, as of January 1, 2021, for socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers who have either USDA direct or guaranteed loans.

USDA will allocate over \$1 billion for activities that include:

- Providing outreach, mediation, and training (financial, capacity building, cooperative development and support), and other technical assistance on food, agriculture, agricultural credit, agricultural extension, rural development, or nutrition to socially disadvantaged farmers, ranchers, forest landowners, or other socially disadvantaged groups.
- Providing grants and loans to improve access to land for socially disadvantaged farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners.
- Supporting/supplementing research, education, extension, scholarships, and programs to provide pathways to Federal employment at colleges and universities that serve socially disadvantaged groups, including Native Hawaiian serving institutions and insular area institutions of higher education.
- Providing financial assistance to socially disadvantaged farmers, ranchers, or forest landowners who are former farm loan borrowers that faced past discrimination, bias, or related actions in USDA programs.

USDA will also administer \$5 million to support equity commissions to address racial equity issues within USDA and its programs.