

# THE BLUEPRINT

## SPECIAL EDITION



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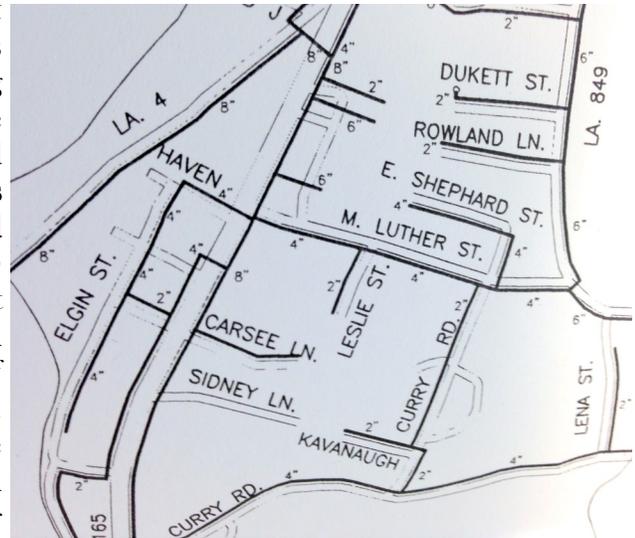
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## USDA Announces Planning Grants

The United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development has announced a new round of planning grants. These grants will assist eligible communities in planning for water and wastewater projects. **SEARCH grants (Special Assistance for Rural Communities and Households)** provide grants for predevelopment planning for financially distressed rural communities with populations of 2,500 or less and are based on need. These planning grant funds can be used for feasibility studies, technical assistance, and design assistance for water and wastewater infrastructure needs. **These grants may be issued for up to \$30,000 and no matching funds are required.**



**A Predevelopment and Planning Grant (PPG)** is another planning grant for the lesser of **\$25,000 or 75% of the project costs**. Communities and water or wastewater districts (publicly and locally organized) are eligible if the median household income of the proposed area is either below the poverty line or below 80 percent of the statewide non-metropolitan median household income. The funds are to be used to develop a completed application for a proposed project. These costs can include the preliminary engineering design and models required to develop a plan for meeting the water and waste needs of the community or water district for example.

The application process for the **SEARCH** or **PPG** grants involves completion of forms designed to show financial need of the community as well as explaining the project being developed. The resulting document from a funded **SEARCH** or **PPG** grant is a Preliminary Engineering Report, which may then be used to apply for any needed funding for the project with **USDA-RD**. Meyer, Meyer, LaCroix & Hixson works with communities regularly to plan system improvements and prepare these documents. We would be glad to meet with you to discuss your community needs to see if one of these grants may be the start your community needs to make needed improvements in your town's infrastructure.

