

[115H6383]



(Original Signature of Member)

116TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

**H. R.** \_\_\_\_\_

To provide funds to enable counties to make competitive grants to qualified local units of government to address major community development and public infrastructure challenges, and for other purposes.

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mrs. CRAIG introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee  
on \_\_\_\_\_

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**A BILL**

To provide funds to enable counties to make competitive grants to qualified local units of government to address major community development and public infrastructure challenges, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Small Cities and  
5 Towns Investment Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. GRANTS FOR COUNTIES.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Agriculture,  
3 through the Rural Development Innovation Center, shall  
4 make a block grant in accordance with this Act to a county  
5 with a submission approved by the Secretary under section  
6 3, for each year in the 5-year period during which the plan  
7 included in the submission is to be in effect.

8 (b) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

9 (1) QUALIFIED LOCAL UNIT OF GOVERN-  
10 MENT.—The term “qualified local unit of govern-  
11 ment” means a town, city, village, township, or simi-  
12 lar entity that has a population of no greater than  
13 30,000 individuals.

14 (2) REGIONAL PLANNING ENTITY.—The term  
15 “regional planning entity” means a regional plan-  
16 ning commission, regional council, or council of gov-  
17 ernments.

18 (3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means  
19 the Secretary of Agriculture.

20 **SEC. 3. SUBMISSION; CONSOLIDATED PLAN.**

21 (a) SUBMISSION.—A county that desires grants  
22 under this Act shall submit to the Secretary a consolidated  
23 plan that—

24 (1) provides a broad overview of the projects for  
25 which the grants are to be used;

1           (2) identifies ways to engage residents of the  
2           county (including by holding public hearings, pub-  
3           lishing information on available funds, or providing  
4           technical assistance for persons interested in apply-  
5           ing for grant funds) throughout the process of ap-  
6           plying for, and using grants provided under this Act;

7           (3) identifies specific areas in need of improve-  
8           ment in the county;

9           (4) describes the short- and long-term commu-  
10          nity and economic development objectives of the  
11          county;

12          (5) identifies the private, public, and nonprofit  
13          institutions that are willing and able to assist in car-  
14          rying out the plan;

15          (6) has been developed in coordination with the  
16          regional planning entity for the area in which the  
17          county is located (or, if there is no such entity for  
18          the area, the Secretary), and using the Comprehen-  
19          sive Economic Development Strategy developed by  
20          the Economic Development Administration in coordi-  
21          nation with the regional planning entity (or, if there  
22          is no such entity, the Secretary);

23          (7) specifies the 5-year period during which the  
24          plan is to be in effect;

1           (8) is submitted to the Secretary and the office  
2 of economic development of the State in which the  
3 county is located, not later than 45 days before the  
4 beginning of the 5-year period referred to in para-  
5 graph (7); and

6           (9) includes—

7           (A) a binding commitment from the State  
8 in which the county is located to provide the  
9 county with \$10 (from funds not provided by  
10 the Federal Government) to carry out the plan  
11 for each \$85 in funds provided to the county  
12 under this Act to carry out the plan; and

13           (B) a binding commitment from the county  
14 that the county will, alone or in combination  
15 with one or more local units of government in  
16 the county, expend a total of \$5 (from funds  
17 not provided by the Federal Government) for  
18 each \$85 in funds provided to the county under  
19 this Act to carry out the plan.

20       (b) APPROVAL; DISAPPROVAL.—

21           (1) APPROVAL.—The Secretary shall approve a  
22 submission that meets the requirements of sub-  
23 section (a) if—

24           (A) not less than 80 percent of the grants  
25 to be provided to the submitter under this Act

1 would be distributed to one or more qualified  
2 local units of government through a competitive  
3 grant program, and the submitter would retain  
4 not more than 20 percent of the grants;

5 (B) the grants would be used, in accord-  
6 ance with the consolidated plan contained in the  
7 submission, to purchase, construct, improve, or  
8 operate essential community facilities (including  
9 health care facilities; public facilities, such as  
10 town halls, courthouses, airport hangers, or  
11 public transportation; community support serv-  
12 ices, such as workforce housing, child care cen-  
13 ters, community centers, or transitional hous-  
14 ing; public safety services; educational services,  
15 including classroom technological moderniza-  
16 tion; utility services, including environmental  
17 protection services such as sewage disposal,  
18 sanitation, and pollution abatement; local food  
19 systems; and local amenities), purchase equip-  
20 ment, and pay related project expenses, con-  
21 sistent with section 5; and

22 (C) each qualified local unit of government  
23 that would be receiving such a grant would en-  
24 sure that each laborer and mechanic employed  
25 by a contractor or subcontractor in performance

1 of construction work financed, in whole or in  
2 part, by the grant would be paid wages at rates  
3 not less than the rates prevailing on similar  
4 construction in the locality as determined by  
5 the Secretary of Labor in accordance with sub-  
6 chapter IV of chapter 31 of title 40, United  
7 States Code (commonly known as the Davis-  
8 Bacon Act); and

9 (D) the submitter demonstrates that there  
10 is substantial community support for the plan.

11 (2) DISAPPROVAL.—The Secretary shall make  
12 available to the general public the reasons for the  
13 disapproval of a submission made pursuant to this  
14 section.

15 **SEC. 4. ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall allocate the  
17 amounts made available by this Act among counties with  
18 submissions approved under section 3, in accordance a for-  
19 mula prescribed by the Secretary in regulations, that the  
20 Secretary determines would best allow counties to address  
21 major community development and public infrastructure  
22 challenges. In developing the formula, the Secretary shall  
23 consider the following criteria:

24 (1) Per capita income levels.

25 (2) Population growth rates.

1 (b) EVALUATION.—Every 2 years, the Secretary shall  
2 evaluate the effectiveness of the formula prescribed under  
3 subsection (a), and revise the formula, as necessary, to  
4 best enable counties to address major community develop-  
5 ment and public infrastructure challenges.

6 (c) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—The Secretary shall  
7 submit to the Congress a report on each formula used  
8 under this section, which sets forth the formula and ex-  
9 plains how allocating the amounts made available by this  
10 Act best achieves the purposes of this Act.

11 **SEC. 5. LIMITATIONS; USE OF FUNDS.**

12 (a) LIMITATIONS.—A local unit of government to  
13 which a grant is made under this Act may not use the  
14 grant—

15 (1) to discriminate against any person on the  
16 basis of race, color, sex, age, sexual orientation, or  
17 national origin;

18 (2) as matching funds to receive Federal funds  
19 under any other law; or

20 (3) in contravention of the requirements under  
21 sections 3141 through 3144, 3146, and 3147 of title  
22 40, United States Code.

23 (b) USE OF FUNDS.—A county to which funds are  
24 provided under this Act for a fiscal year shall reserve 1  
25 percent of the funds for administration of the funds.

1 **SEC. 6. ANNUAL ACTION REPORTS; AUDITS BY THE INSPEC-**  
2 **TOR GENERAL.**

3 (a) ANNUAL ACTION REPORTS.—By the end of each  
4 year for which a grant is made under this Act to a county,  
5 the county shall submit to the Secretary a report that—

6 (1) identifies the development goals of the coun-  
7 ty for the succeeding year;

8 (2) contains a brief summary of the actions and  
9 activities to be undertaken with funds provided  
10 under this Act, and identifies specific, measurable  
11 goals that match the priorities identified in the plan  
12 to be carried out using the funds;

13 (3) outlines the Federal and non-Federal re-  
14 sources that will be used in doing so;

15 (4) details the progress made by the county in  
16 achieving the goals identified as described in this  
17 subsection for the preceding year; and

18 (5) includes information on the amount of the  
19 grant provided to the county for the year covered by  
20 the report, and details on how the money was dis-  
21 tributed for each project under the plan referred to  
22 in section 3.

23 (b) AUDITS BY THE INSPECTOR GENERAL.—The In-  
24 spector General of the Department of Agriculture shall  
25 conduct periodic and random audits of the projects to  
26 which funds are provided under this Act.



1 **SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

2       There is authorized to be appropriated  
3 \$10,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2021 and each succeeding  
4 fiscal year to make grants under this Act.