

STAKEHOLDER ANNOUNCEMENT

More Than \$522 million in Grant Funds Requested through First Round of ReConnect Pilot Program Applications

Loan-Only and Loan-Grant Combination Applications Still Being Accepted Through
www.USDA.gov/reconnect

WASHINGTON, June 3, 2019 – Acting Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development Joel Baxley today announced the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) received 78 applications requesting more than \$522 million in grant-only funding in the first round of the ReConnect Pilot Program. USDA has \$200 million available for grant-only projects in this round of funding.

The 78 applications received represent 1,688 farms and 1,716 businesses in rural areas across 34 states.

In March 2018, Congress provided \$600 million to USDA to expand broadband infrastructure and services in rural America, and on December 13, Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue announced the rules of the program. On March 29, 2019, USDA began accepting applications.

For this first round, USDA has made available up to \$200 million in grants, \$200 million in loan and grant combinations, and \$200 million in low-interest loans. The application deadlines are:

- May 31, 2019, for grant-only projects;
- June 21, 2019, for loan/grant combinations; and
- July 12, 2019, for low-interest loans.

Applicants can request technical assistance from USDA by filling out the contact form at <https://www.usda.gov/reconnect/contact-us>.

State and local governments, Indian tribes, for- and non-profit entities, limited liability companies, and cooperative or mutual organizations may apply for funding through USDA's ReConnect Program to connect rural areas that currently have insufficient broadband service. Funds will be awarded to projects that have financially sustainable business models that will bring high-speed broadband to rural homes, businesses, farms, ranches and community facilities such as first responders, health care sites and schools.

The ReConnect Program enables USDA to create and implement innovative solutions to rural connectivity by providing various financial options to our partners and customers. For the announcement opening the application windows, see Page 5981 of the Feb 25, 2019, [Federal Register](#). For the first round Reconnect Program requirements, see page 64315 of the Dec. 14, 2018, [Federal Register](#) or visit reconnect.usda.gov. Information for future rounds will also be set forth in the Federal Register, given that Congress has provided an additional \$550 million for the ReConnect Program.

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