



# News Release

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## **USDA Seeks Applications for Technology Grants to Expand Access to Health Care and Education in Rural Areas**

WASHINGTON, April 13, 2018 – Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development Anne Hazlett today announced that USDA is accepting applications for grants to use broadband e-Connectivity to improve access to health care and educational services in rural communities.

“Under Secretary Perdue’s leadership, USDA is tackling e-Connectivity as a foundational issue for rural communities because it affects everything from business opportunities to adequate health care access,” Hazlett said. “These grants are one of many tools USDA provides to help ensure that people who live and work in rural areas can use broadband to gain access to essential services and economic opportunities.”

USDA is awarding grants ranging from \$50,000 to \$500,000 under the [Distance Learning and Telemedicine](#) (DLT) program. Grants can finance projects such as those to provide job training, academic instruction or access to specialized medical care.

Proposals for projects whose primary purpose is to provide opioid prevention, treatment and recovery will receive 10 priority points when applications are scored. USDA is approaching the opioid misuse crisis with a dedicated urgency because it impacts the quality of life, economic opportunity and rural prosperity.

USDA also will provide priority points for grants that offer access to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) courses.

Grants are available to most state and local governmental entities, federally recognized tribes, nonprofit groups, for-profit businesses or a consortia of these.

The application deadline is June 4, 2018. Applications can be submitted via paper or electronically. For details on how to apply, see page 14245 of the April 3 [Federal Register](#).

In South Dakota, Horizon Health Care used a \$238,303 DLT grant in 2015 to develop a video-based mental health network for the central and southwest regions of the state. The video network was launched last year. It covers more than one-third of the state.

In April 2017, President Donald J. Trump established the Interagency Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity to identify legislative, regulatory and policy changes that could

promote agriculture and prosperity in rural communities. In January 2018, Secretary Perdue presented the Task Force's findings to President Trump. These findings included 31 recommendations to align the federal government with state, local and tribal governments to take advantage of opportunities that exist in rural America.

To view the report in its entirety, please view the [Report to the President of the United States from the Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity](#) (PDF, 5.4 MB). In addition, to view the categories of the recommendations, please view the [Rural Prosperity infographic](#) (PDF, 190 KB).

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities and create jobs in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community services such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural areas. For more information, visit [www.rd.usda.gov](http://www.rd.usda.gov).

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