



News Release

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USDA Prioritizes Investments in Telemedicine to Address Opioid Crisis in Rural America

WASHINGTON, Feb. 14, 2019 – Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development Anne Hazlett today announced that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is giving funding priority in a key grant program for applications to address opioid misuse in rural communities.

“The opioid epidemic is dramatically impacting prosperity in many small towns and rural places across the country,” Hazlett said. “With this focused investment, we are targeting our resources to be a strong partner to rural communities to build innovative local responses to this significant challenge.”

USDA may award up to 30 special consideration points for [Distance Learning and Telemedicine \(DLT\)](#) program applications for projects that provide opioid treatment services in 220 at-risk counties identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The deadline for these applications is April 15, 2019.

USDA may award 10 special consideration points for opioid-related DLT projects or for those that provide Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education as their primary purpose. The application deadline for these projects is May 15, 2019.

All DLT applications can be submitted electronically at Grants.gov or in hard copy to: USDA Rural Development Telecommunications Programs, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Room 2844, Mail Stop 1597, Washington, DC 20250-1597.

President Donald J. Trump has mobilized his entire Administration to address opioid misuse by directing the declaration of a nationwide Public Health Emergency. To help local leaders respond to this epidemic, USDA has worked to build infrastructure for prevention, treatment and recovery, facilitate partnerships, and drive innovation in rural communities.

Last year, USDA worked with the Office of National Drug Control Policy to establish a White House Rural Opioid Federal Interagency Working Group that is improving coordination of federal resources in rural America. In December, USDA launched the Community Opioid Misuse Toolbox. This initiative includes the [Community Resource Guide](#), a comprehensive directory of federal resources that can help rural communities address the opioid crisis, and the [Community Assessment Tool](#), an interactive database to help community leaders assess how and

why the opioid epidemic is impacting their regions. For more information, visit www.usda.gov/topics/opioids.

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 facilities such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural areas. For more information, visit www.rd.usda.gov.

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