



## STAKEHOLDER ANNOUNCEMENT

### USDA Announces Opening Date for Rural e-Connectivity Pilot Program Applications

WASHINGTON, March 29, 2019 – Acting Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development Joel Baxley today announced that USDA Rural Development will begin accepting the first round of applications for the Rural e-Connectivity Pilot Program (ReConnect Program) on April 23, 2019, through [reconnect.usda.gov](https://reconnect.usda.gov).

In March 2018, Congress provided \$600 million to USDA to expand broadband infrastructure and services in rural America. On December 13, Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue announced the rules of the program, called “ReConnect,” including how the loans and grants will be awarded to help build broadband infrastructure in rural America.

USDA is making 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 grants;
- 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>.

Telecommunications companies, rural electric cooperatives and utilities, internet service providers and municipalities 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 additional information, see page 5981 of the Feb. 25, 2019, [Federal Register](#) and page 64315 of the Dec. 14, 2018, [Federal Register](#) or visit [reconnect.usda.gov](https://reconnect.usda.gov).

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