



Community Connect Grants

What does this program do?

This program helps fund broadband deployment into rural communities where it is not yet economically viable for private sector providers to deliver service.

Who may apply for this program?

Eligible applicants include:

- Most State and local governments
- Federally recognized Tribes
- Nonprofits
- For-profit corporations

What is an eligible area?

Rural areas that lack any existing broadband speed of 4 Mbps downstream and 1 Mbps upstream are eligible.

- The Broadband Mapping Tool provides guidance on rural areas currently eligible for Community Connect Grants
- Public Notices regarding areas where applicants propose to provide service are also posted to the Mapping Tool website for public comment

How may the funds be used?

- The construction, acquisition, or leasing of facilities, spectrum, land or buildings used to deploy broadband service for:
 - all residential and business customers located within the Proposed Funded Service Area (PFSA)
 - all participating critical community facilities (such as public schools, fire stations, and public libraries)
- The cost of providing broadband service free of charge to the critical community facilities for 2 years
- Up to 10% of the grant may be used for the improvement, expansion, construction, or acquisition of a community center that provides online access to the public

Are there other requirements?

- Buildings constructed with grant funds must be located on property owned by the awardee
- Leasing expenses will only be covered through the advance of funds period included in the award documents
- Borrowers must have legal authority to provide, construct, operate and maintain the proposed facilities or services
- Partnerships with other federal, state, local, private, and nonprofit entities are encouraged
- For additional detail see Code of Federal Regulations 7 CFR, Part 1739

Are there any other grant requirements?

Matching funds of at least 15% from non-federal sources are required and can be used for operating costs.

How do we get started?

- Applications for this program are serviced by RUS national office staff
- Program resources are available online (forms, guidance, certifications, etc.)



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Who can answer questions about this program?

- Email us at community.connect@wdc.usda.gov
- Call the Loan Origination and Approval Division, Telecommunications Program at (202) 720-0800

What governs this program?

- 7 CFR, Part 1739 Subpart A

Why does USDA Rural Development do this?

The Community Connect program helps rural communities extend access where broadband service is least likely to be commercially available, but where it can make a tremendous difference in the quality of life for people and businesses. The projects funded by these grants help rural residents tap into the enormous potential of the Internet for jobs, education, healthcare, public safety and community development.

NOTE: Because citations and other information may be subject to change please always consult the program instructions listed in the section above titled "What Law Governs this Program?" You may also contact **your local office** for assistance. You will find additional forms, resources, and program information at www.rd.usda.gov. *USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.*