



## STAKEHOLDER ANNOUNCEMENT

### **USDA Rural Development Announces Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program Eligibility Expansion and Administration Improvements**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 16, 2018 – Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development Anne Hazlett today announced a regulation improvement that will expand eligibility for and simplify the administration of the [Distance Learning and Telemedicine](#) (DLT) grant program.

Under the rewritten regulation (7 CFR 1734), organizations holding USDA rural telecommunications or electric program loans are now eligible to apply for DLT grants. In addition, DLT grants can now be used to construct or improve broadband transmission facilities.

A newly streamlined process also makes this important program more customer-friendly by easing access to USDA announcements of funding and solicitations of applications. With these changes, USDA will be able to more broadly market the program and provide potential customers more time to apply for federal support of their rural e-connectivity projects.

“These improvements to Rural Development’s Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program carry out Secretary Perdue’s Strategic Goal #1 – an efficient and effective, customer-focused USDA,” said Anne Hazlett, Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development. “With these reforms, we’re also making progress in expanding the health and education benefits of e-connectivity for rural communities.”

All program changes were effective Dec. 27, 2017.

Regulatory reform is one of the cornerstones of USDA’s strategies for creating a culture of consistent, efficient service to customers, while reducing burdens and improving efficiency. This regulation improvement is one of 14 regulations USDA Rural Development has identified for revision or elimination since Jan. 20, 2017.

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