

STAKEHOLDER ANNOUNCEMENT

USDA Seeks Applications to Increase Rural Access to Education, Training and Health Care

WASHINGTON, Feb. 11, 2020 – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development Donald “DJ” LaVoy today announced that USDA is accepting applications for grants to help increase access to education, training and health care resources in rural communities.

USDA is making \$71.7 million in grants available under the [Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant](#) program. This program helps rural communities use telecommunications-based audio and video equipment to connect teachers, students, medical providers and rural residents with each other and the world.

Applicants in rural areas of 20,000 people or less who provide education or health care services through telecommunications facilities are eligible to apply. Applications will be scored, reviewed and selected on a competitive basis.

Applications must be submitted to the applicant’s [nearest USDA office](#) or electronically via [grants.gov](#) by April, 10, 2020. For more information, visit [grants.gov](#).

USDA encourages applications that will support recommendations made in the [Report to the President of the United States from the Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity](#) (PDF, 5.4 MB) to help improve the quality of life in rural America. Applicants are encouraged to consider projects that provide measurable results in helping rural communities build robust and sustainable economies through strategic investments in infrastructure, partnerships and innovation. Key strategies include:

- Achieving e-Connectivity for Rural America
- Developing the Rural Economy
- Harnessing Technological Innovation
- Supporting a Rural Workforce
- Improving Quality of Life

USDA encourages applications for projects located in rural Opportunity Zones. Localities qualify as Opportunity Zones if they have been nominated for that designation by the state and that nomination has been certified by the Secretary of the U.S. Treasury via his delegation of authority to the Internal Revenue Service.

USDA also encourages applications that will support the Administration’s goal to combat substance use disorder, including opioid misuse, in high-risk rural communities by strengthening the capacity to address prevention, treatment and/or recovery.

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USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.